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# A RABBINICAL COMMENTARY ON GENESIS.

LIST OF NUMERICAL VALUES OF THE HEBREW LETTERS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| א Aleph, 1. | ט Teth, 9. | פ Pe, 80. |
| ב Beth, 2. | י Yod, 10. | צ Tzaddi, 90. |
| ג Gimel, 3. | כ Caph, 20. | ק Koph, 100. |
| ד Daleth, 4. | ל Lamed, 30. | ר Resh, 200. |
| ה He, 5. | מ Mem, 40. | ש Schin (or Shin), |
| ו Vau, 6. | נ Nun, 50. | 300. |
| ז Zain, 7. | ס Samech, 60. | ת Tau, 400. |
| ח Cheth, 8. | ע Ain, 70. | |

As illustrations of the manner in which additional meanings are extracted from words because of the numerical value of the letters composing them, see examples on page 79 relating to Eliezer; and on page 90, where Abram is re-named AbraHam.

צְאֶינָה וּרְאֶינָה׳

TZEÉNAH UREÉNAH:—"GO YE AND SEE."

# A RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

ON

# GENESIS.

Translated from the Judæo-Polish, with Notes and Indices.

BY

PAUL ISAAC HERSHON,

*Author of "Treasures of the Talmud," etc., etc.*

With Introductory Preface

BY THE

VEN. ARCHDEACON F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.,

*Chaplain in ordinary to Her Majesty, and Canon of Westminster.*

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דכתיב ביה כתיב ביה, ודלא כתיב ביה כתיב ביה:

"What is (here) written, is written; and what is (here) not written, (infer) from what is written."—*Sotah*, fol. 11B.

560 228
Loeb, rl.

Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.

BY his previous writings—*Genesis with a Talmudic Commentary*, *The Treasures of the Talmud*, and *The Talmudic Miscellany*—Mr. Hershon has placed within the reach of English readers such a knowledge of Rabbinic literature as it would have been previously impossible for them to acquire without long and laborious researches. In those works he has translated large sections of the Gemara, and of later Jewish writings, and his inexhaustible diligence has selected those passages which throw the greatest amount of light upon the habits of thought which led to the elaboration of the Talmud. An increasing multitude of students has recently become convinced of the importance of these studies for the elucidation of the New Testament, and for the solution of many problems in the history of early Christianity.

In the translation which he now lays before the reader, Mr. Hershon once more furnishes abundant specimens of the singular methods of exegesis which prevailed for centuries in the schools of Tiberias, of Babylonia, and of mediæval Europe.

The reader will here find *Halachoth*, or inferential and traditional developments of legal precepts; and *Haggadoth*, or the many fanciful forms adopted for the conveyance of homiletic teaching and legendary lore. He will also be able

to judge of the value or worthlessness of the Kabbalistic devices,—*Gematria*, *Notarikon*, and *Themurah*,—which, by the application of anagrams, acrostics, or numerical interchanges, were used to develop a multitude of supposed mysteries, of which the existence would certainly never have been suspected by ordinary students of Holy Writ.

This little volume will alone suffice to give an insight into the character of those voluminous books of commentary known as the *Midrashim*. Rabbi Jacob, of Frankfort, the author of the *Tzeénah Ureénah*, did not intend his commentary to be regarded as an original contribution to the interpretation of Scripture. It is avowedly a compilation from ancient sources, like the *Glosses* and *Catenæ* of mediæval scholars; and this constitutes its sole value and importance. Had it been original it would certainly have not become so popular, nor would it have been so readily accepted as orthodox. The intention of the Rabbi was to select from the Talmud and the Midrashim whatever he considered likely to be useful and interesting to his Hebrew readers. The extraordinary vitality of his work, and the immense sway maintained by the Amoraim of the Talmud over the minds of many succeeding generations, receives a very striking illustration in the fact that this commentary should, after many previous editions, have been reprinted at Wilna so late as the year 1877. Indeed it retains its popularity among the Jews to the present day, and any one who wishes may purchase it in Duke Street, Aldgate, in the original language. It is in fact a standard work in constant demand.

But while the following pages are full of interest both to the historic student, and to all who know how much we have yet to gain from the study of "comparative religion," it is only a very small fraction of this commentary which can be regarded as really exegetical. It is melancholy to see how completely the true lessons of Scripture are missed in chapter after chapter, and how much that is fantastic and frivolous is offered in lieu of moral and spiritual edification. Perhaps if our eyes were opened we might see that the same remark applies to many Christian commentaries. No age has had a monopoly in hewing out for itself cisterns—broken cisterns—that hold no water, while its children might have drunk of the wells of living water which spring up to eternal life.

If I were to allow myself to point out passages that bear illustratively on the history alike of Christian theology and of general human thought, I should have a long task before me. The book will doubtless fall into the hands of many scholars who can perform that task far better for themselves. I must however say one word as to the value of some of Mr. Hershon's own footnotes, and may point in particular to the curious note on p. 138, which gives a little flash of insight into the more recondite speculations of Kabbalistic theosophy. The reader will also study with interest the learned remarks of the translator on pp. 285 and 302. Whether he agrees with them or not, they will be found to be suggestive and worthy of attention.

Needless as I feel these few words of introduction to be, I write them at Mr. Hershon's request, because I am glad to

acknowledge how much I, among others, have been aided by his thorough knowledge of the Talmud, and by the self-denying labour with which he has placed that knowledge at the disposal of all who wished to obtain a clearer insight into Jewish theology and Jewish thought.

F. W. FARRAR.

# INTRODUCTION.

THE *Tzeénah Ureénah* ("Go ye and see") takes its title from Canticles iii. 11, with which, however, it has no closer connection, the work being, in fact, a popular commentary on the Pentateuch, for the use of Jewish families. It is divided into fifty-two Sections, technically called *Parashayoth*, designed to be read in the home circle, a Section on every Sabbath all the year round. The compilation is said to be the work of Rabbi Jacob, who published it at Frankfort, in the year 1693, and it has ever since enjoyed an uninterrupted popularity among the communities called Polish Jews. This translation is made from a copy published at Wilna as recently as 1877, printed in the Judæo-Polish dialect. The work can, however, be easily purchased in London, where there are now many thousand Polish Jews, sufficient at all events to support two newspapers—the *Zukunft* and the *Hashulamit*—both printed in Jewish jargon, like the original of this translation. I have selected the Book of Genesis, which occupies about 200 large 8vo pages of small print in the original, as being a fair specimen of the whole, which extends to nearly 700 pages.

In most cases the verses follow consecutively the Biblical order, though there are curious exceptions to this rule, the result, apparently, of carelessness rather than design. The major portion of the text receives some commentary, sometimes of considerable length, always of varied character, and

often of startling novelty. Genesis being familiar to every English reader, the Rabbinical glosses and discussions upon the text can be followed without difficulty, and they are sufficiently curious to excite the interest, if not the admiration, of every Bible student.

In some other respects, also, the present work has advantages over its predecessors relating more directly to the Talmud. The *Tzeénah Ureénah* is more modern, more intelligible, and far less discursive than the generality of Jewish works of a similar kind. It need hardly be said that it is based on the Talmud, or on writings which have themselves been inspired by that famous book. Indeed, this is the case with all Jewish literature dating subsequent to the sixth century of the present era. There is probably not a strictly Jewish book—that is to say a book for Jews written by a Jew—that is not dominated by the Talmudic spirit, the Talmud being freely drawn upon for matter, and appealed to as authority. It is this circumstance that renders the Babylonian Talmud—intrinsically of little value—a work of immense importance on account of the influence it has had in moulding the character of the Jewish people and in shaping their destiny. All denials notwithstanding, the Talmud is not only the foundation, but the very material of which modern Judaism is built; and modern Judaism finds its expression in such works as the *Tzeénah Ureénah*.

It is commonly alleged by the Jews, when confronted with the extravagancies, puerilities and malignities of their sacred Talmud, that they know nothing of the original, that it is antiquated, and is no longer binding on them. In one sense this is true, for only the learned can read it, and none but experts can understand it; but in a practical sense the assertion is false, seeing that their devotional books, including

the Liturgies, are impregnated with the Talmud from beginning to end. Thus even were the Talmud destroyed, which the Church has attempted on more than one occasion, its influence would still be exerted from every Jewish book-shelf, though the Talmud itself would not be there. In this way their household sayings, their national proverbs, their anti-Gentile maxims, their sectarian prejudices, and their grotesque superstitions are kept alive among the Jews although the book from which they are culled has been, in a certain sense, nominally dead nearly a thousand years.

Some proofs of this statement will be found in the following pages, a study of which will greatly assist the Gentile reader in mastering the mysteries of the Talmud, the Midrashim, and the Kabbalah. It will also enlighten him as to the true character of the modern schools of Jewish Biblical criticism—if indeed Rabbinical commentary of any kind can be called criticism. Such as it is, however, the *Tzeénah Ureénah* is modern, and it cannot be repudiated, as its ancient progenitors so often are. It occupies an honoured place in the family library of every Orthodox Jew—at all events of the Polish Jew, the ruling spirit of Judaism at the present day—whose religious views must be greatly influenced by such works as this.

The original work has no divisions, paragraphs or references, except Parashayoth, or Sections; and Genesis is divided into twelve such sections;[1] the other four books of the Pentateuch have ten Sections each. For the convenience of a more fas-

[1] The first Parashah, or Sedrah, or Section, of the first book of the Pentateuch comprises Gen. i.–vi. 8, and is technically called בראשית, *i.e.* "The Beginning." The second Section is called נח, Noah, and consist of chap. vi. 9–xi. 32. The third, from xii. 1.–xvii. 27 is called לך לך, *i.e.* "Get thee out." The fourth, xviii.–xxii. is called וירא "And he appeared," and so on.

tidious public, I have separated the text from the commentary, and the chapters and verses of the Biblical texts are marked. Where the Judæo-Polish rendering of the Hebrew text differs from the English Authorised Version, I have often, but not invariably, followed my original, to show the liberties which the compilers are in the habit of taking with the Hebrew, even when the readers are exclusively Hebrews. References to the Talmud have been furnished in footnotes wherever I recognised the passage as being taken from that source. Explanatory notes have also been added where the meaning or allusions would otherwise be unintelligible to the Gentile reader. In all other respects the text is given in its integrity. The idiom of the original has been followed as closely as possible, and only a few comments omitted which were of too coarse a nature for the English reader. Where an addition is made to explain the sense, it is generally indicated by parentheses.

In placing this work before the English reader, I take the opportunity of sincerely thanking the literary gentlemen who have aided me materially in getting it ready for press; and more especially do I desire heartily to thank the Venerable Archdeacon Farrar for the kind advice and encouragement he has occasionally given me during the past ten or eleven years, and for his valuable preface to this Rabbinical Commentary, which opens up a new way and "*a clearer insight into Jewish theology and Jewish thought.*"

P. I. HERSHON.

# RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

ON

# GENESIS.

*IN THE BEGINNING God created the heaven and the earth.* At the creation of heaven and earth, the earth was desolate and void, and God's throne of glory hovered in the air over the water. Why does the Torah [1] commence with the (letter [2]) Beth ? [3] Because Beth is (the first letter of the word) *Blessing*,[4] and therefore has God commenced (the Torah) with the Beth.

Then the (letter) Aleph flew before the Holy One, blessed be He ! and said : "Begin the Torah with *me*, for *I* am the first letter of the alphabet !" The Holy One, blessed be He ! replied : "I shall begin the Decalogue on Mount Sinai with the (letter) Aleph : I am the Lord thy God." [5] And the Torah commences with the term *In the Beginning ;* to teach us that the world was created for the sake of the Torah, which is called "the *Beginning* of his way." [6]

Rabbi Isaac asks : Why has the Torah (at all) recorded how God created the world? The Torah is only (a book of) Precepts, and it ought to have commenced with Precepts. But (the explanation is this). When the seven Nations will subsequently

[1] The Law of Moses is generally called Torah ; sometimes spelt Thorah.
[2] For the placing words thus in parenthesis, *see* Introduction.
[3] It is not the first but the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
[4] ברכה Blessing. [5] Exod. xx. 2. אנכי ה' אלהיך.
[6] Prov. viii. 22. ראשית דרכו.

say to Israel, "Ye are robbers! for ye take from us the Land of Israel;" Israel will answer them: "God created the world; at first He gave it to you, and now He gives it to us." [1]

Our sages have said: For the sake of three things has God created the world. For the sake of the Torah (the Law of Moses), which is called "*Beginning* of His way;" and for the sake of the Sacrifices which were offered in the temple, which is called "*Beginning*," [2] for the temple was created *before* the world; [3] and for the sake of Tithes, which are also "*Beginning*" (*i.e. first*, firstfruits) of corn. [4] And because the Torah makes here (indirect) allusion to the temple, it therefore also indicates the destruction of the temple, for it says:

2 *And the earth was desolate and void.* The earth will be desolate, for the Shechinah will depart (from the earth) at the destruction of the temple, and hence it is said:

*And the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the water*, which intimates to us, that even although we be in exile (when, with the destruction of the temple, the Shechinah will depart), yet the Torah (or the law) shall not depart from us; and therefore it is added:

3 *And God said, Let there be light.* This shows us that after the captivity God will *enlighten* us, and send us the Messiah, respecting whom it is said: "Arise, shine, for thy *light* is come." [5]

*And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.* God has created two lights, the sun and the moon, and these shine upon the world. But God has created yet another light for the righteous, when the Messiah comes. This light is very great, and because the world was not worthy He reserved it for the righteous (in the world to come). [6]

Rabbi Shimon says: *Five* times (does the word) "*light*" occur in this chapter, according to the number of the books in the Pentateuch, for the Torah (or the Law of Moses) is likened

[1] See *Tal. Misc.*, 116, 38. [2] Jer. xvii. 12. [3] *Tal. Misc.*, 104, 4.
[4] Deut. xviii. 4. ראשית דגנך. [5] Isa. lx. 1. [6] *Chaggigah*, fol. 12A.

to light.[1] The first time "*Let there be light*" is for the book of Genesis, for with *light* God has created the world. The second time "*Let there be light*" is for the book of Exodus, in which it is recorded how the Israelites came out of the Egyptian captivity, out of darkness into *light;* for at the redemption it is stated: "All the children of Israel had *light* in their dwellings."[2] The third time (ver. 4) it is said: "And God saw the *light* that it was good." This is for the book of Leviticus, in which sacrifices are spoken of, when man was obliged to repent in order that he might be *enlightened.* The fourth time it is said: "God divided the *light;*" this is for the book of Numbers, in which it is said that Israel were separated from their evil works, and that the temple travelled with them in the wilderness and *enlightened* them. The fifth time it says: "And God called the *light* day." This is for the book of Deuteronomy, where *only* precepts and Halachas shine as a *light,* and thus it is shown to us that there are *five* lights: the first is that by which the world was created; the second is the Redemption, which is likened to a light; the third is when one repents and thus becomes enlightened; the fourth is the temple; and the fifth is the Torah, or the law and the commandments. The text, "*Let there be light,*" teaches us that with *light* God has created the world, and as soon as God uttered "*Let there be light,*" the world began to be created.

*Let there be* (y'hee[3] in the original). This word (y'hee) has the numerical value[4] of *twenty-five,* and shows that the world was created on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul (about September), for the Gemara says that Adam was created on New Year's day[5] (about October), and that was the *sixth day* of the creation.

All things were created before Adam in order that man

[1] ותורה אור Prov. vi. 23. [2] Exod. x. 23. [3] יהי.

[4] For the numerical value of letters, see *Tal. Misc.*, 318, 1, and also List of Numerical Values at end of Introduction.

[5] The Gemara *nowhere* says that Adam was created on New Year's day.

should not be proud of himself, for he should bear in mind that the cattle and the beasts were better than he, because they (had the precedence and) were created before him.

Another explanation why man was created after every (other) creature is, in order that man should find everything ready prepared for his use.

5 *And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night, and it is evening and morning one*[1] *day.*

6 *And God said, Let the heavens strengthen themselves between* (the upper and lower) *waters.* On the first day the heavens were weak, and God rebuked them. On the second day, on God's rebuke, they strengthened themselves.

*Between the waters* (A.V. in the midst of the waters). The heavens made a distinction (or separation) between the waters, for there are also waters above the heavens as they are (here below) on earth. And the waters are as high above the heavens, as the distance is from heaven to earth.[2] The waters above heaven are suspended in the air by the command of God. The lower waters pleaded, "Why should we be here below on earth, we wish also to be on high above the heavens!" But God pacified them by the promise that no sacrifice should be offered on the Altar without *salt*,[3] and salt comes from (sea) water.

It is mentioned of each day of the creation, "That it was good;" but the second day, this term, "That it was good," is omitted. It is because the creation on the second day was not quite perfect, and a thing not perfect is not good. The waters created on the second day were perfected on the third, and therefore on the third day it is mentioned *twice* "That it was good;" once when the waters were perfected, and once when the creation of the earth was further completed.

[1] It is said אחד and not ראשון.

[2] The distance between heaven and earth is about 500 years' journey. See *Gen. acc. to the Talm.*, p. 10, 4.

[3] Lev. ii. 13.

Some sages say: Because hell was created on the second day, is why "That it was good" was omitted from the record of that day.

Other sages say: "That it was good" is omitted, because on that day the waters began to quarrel among themselves, and from a quarrel *no good* can come, for he who quarrels falls into hell, as it happened unto Korah.[1] We have it recorded in the Talmud, "That an Arab said to Rabbah bar bar Channah, Come and I will show thee the spot where Korah and his party were swallowed up. On our arrival there (says the Rabbi), I noticed smoke issuing from two fissures. I tied a quantity of moist wool to the head of a spear, and inserted it into the fissures, and when I took it out again it was singed. Listen, said the Arab. I did so, and I heard them cry: Moses is true, and his law is true, and we are liars."[2] Therefore let every man be warned not to quarrel.

Some other sages say: That no (new business or) trade should be commenced on Mondays; because it is not mentioned of the second day, "That it was good."[3]

The moon said: "Why should the sun shine equally with me?" She wanted to shine more (than the sun). Therefore has God diminished her size and her light. On the sixth day Adam sinned and was driven out of the garden of Eden. Now it can be seen that quarrelling commenced from the *second* day.

9 *Let the waters be gathered together.* On the *third* day God said: "Let all the waters be gathered together unto one place that the dry land may appear," and all the waters immediately gathered themselves unto one place, and this is the Great Sea.

14 *Let there be lights.* On the fourth day God said: "Let

[1] Num. xvi. 33.

[2] The translation of this legend is borrowed from *Gen. acc. to the Talm.*, p. 371, 59, being a more correct one than in the Judæo-Polish.

[3] Observed by the orthodox Jews to this day. Good or bad omens are looked upon as Divine oracles.

the lights be *in heaven*," for though the light was created on the first day, yet they were not suspended in heaven till the fourth day. It was then that God suspended in heaven the sun and the moon, and the constellations, and the stars, that their lights should be for signs; the sun and moon being signs when prayers should be performed. In the morning the sun is a sign of the time when to put on the phylacteries and to read the Sh'ma;[1] and in the evening, when the stars appear (at least two stars), it is the time for the evening prayer. The sun and the moon were given for us to indicate when to celebrate the festivals, for we reckon all festivals by the (appearance of the) moon; also by their means it is known when it is day or night, and when the year terminates.

Rabbi Azariah said: The sun only was originally created to give light; but God (on second thought) said: "If the sun alone should shine, men will hold that the sun is God;" therefore God created the moon also, in order that people should not hold that the sun be God. Both sun and moon were equally great lights; but the moon having said: "Why should we both equally shine, let me shine alone?" God said to her: "Because thou wishest to exalt thyself to shine alone, thou art to become *less*."

Rabbi B'chai (in his Commentary on the Pentateuch), in section Phineas,[2] states, that at the sacrifice offered on the new moon[3] (beginning of the month), the term "*unto the Lord*" occurs more than at all other sacrifices. The reason is this: God created the sun and moon of equal light. Now the moon receives light from the sun, for the moon is black in herself, and shines by the light of the sun. The fact is this; the moon said before God: "Lord of the universe! hast Thou no power

[1] The six verses in Deut. vi. 4–9 are called the Sh'ma, which means "Hear." This Sh'ma is incorporated into the prayers repeated by every Jew thrice *each day*.

[2] This section comprises Num. xxv. 10.–xxxi. 1.

[3] Num. xxviii. 11, etc. See *Gen. acc. to the Talm.*, p. 45, 16.

(to make me) that I should be able to shine without the (borrowed light of the) sun? I am of equal use in the world as the sun; and people may say, God forbid, Thou hast no power to make my light separate and apart!" God in anger replied, "Wilt thou teach Me what to do, and how to do it? Because thou hast dared to speak against Me, the light which thou hast even from the sun shall also be lessened! But because thou hast spoken *à propos*, shall My children Israel bring a sacrifice (*unto the Lord*) every new moon."

And the sun was and is to shine by day, and the moon by night, otherwise men would not know when it is day and when night, and they would work continually without rest, and would soon die in consequence of over work. "Therefore," said God, "people ought to know when it is day, and when night, in order that they should at night rest from their labour. Moreover," God said, "the night is required for studying the Torah (*i.e.* law), for people are quiet then and one can well study (without interruption)." God has also intimated that if one repents, He is well pleased with him; as we find it in the case of the moon, God has ordained a sacrifice to be offered on each new moon, of which it is specially said: "*A sin offering unto the Lord.*"[1]

20 *Let the waters bring forth abundantly.* On the fifth day God said: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly, and out of the waters let there be created a living body, and fowls that have wings, and also the great leviathan." And the Holy One, blessed be He! blessed the fish more than all other creatures, because all people catch fish, for they belong to nobody, and therefore has God blessed them that, in spite of their being caught so much, they should multiply.

The beasts also have no owner, and are public property, and are largely caught, yet has not God blessed them, because the *serpent*, which God wished to curse, also is a beast, and if He

[1] Num. xxviii. 15.

had blessed the beasts the serpent also would have shared in the blessing.

21 *Great whales.* The great fish; for there are great fish of many hundreds of miles in extent, as is recorded in the Talmud in the treatise Bava-Bathra.[1] Rabbah bar bar Channah said: Once we sailed in a ship, and noticed a fish floating on the surface of the sea, which had upon its back an accumulation of sand, and reeds were growing out of it. Thinking it was dry land we disembarked, and began to bake and cook upon it. When the fish found that our operations were becoming too warm to be pleasant, he turned himself over, and if our vessel had not been near we should all have been drowned.

Rabbi B'chai writes: Because God had blessed the fishes, therefore they remained alive during the Deluge, when all other living creatures were utterly destroyed.

26 *Let us make man.* God said this on the sixth day, and by this He teaches us, that a man, when he is about to undertake doing anything, should consult other people. In creating man, however, God alone made him, without the aid of any one else, as the text says:

27 *So God created man.* He alone made him on earth as He (alone) made the angels in heaven; alike in understanding and in similitude. And God said that man should—

28 *Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* Rabbi B'chai writes: Because the text says: "*And God blessed them, and God said unto them,* be fruitful and multiply," *two* blessings were pronounced upon man. One was, that his food should be blessed in his body, which is daily weakened, but strengthened again by food, for by reason of two causes the moisture in man dries up; one cause is, the heat within him, and the other is, the wind that blows upon him. Both these causes dry up his fluids, but food and drink restore them again in the same proportion as they are dried up; for by God's

[1] Fol. 73 B.

blessing the food disperseth throughout all the members of his body. The *second* blessing was, "*Be fruitful and multiply*," which means, that man should beget children to serve God and to know their Creator.

And the Holy One, blessed be He! said: "Man may eat fruit and everything sown on the earth; but cattle, beasts and the fowls may not eat fruits, nor anything sown, except (simple) grass." But man was not to eat the flesh of any other creatures, for they have a soul like that of man; and though they are not quite like, yet there is a high value in souls. After the Deluge, the cattle, the beasts and the fowls having corrupted their ways, God permitted man to eat flesh; for Noah was a righteous man in the days of the Deluge, and through his merit all creatures were saved in the ark, therefore God said unto Noah: "Thou mayest eat flesh," for only the soul of man was created for (the sole purpose of) studying the Torah (the Law) and to comprehend the power of God, and to perform His commandments.

The Midrash Rabbah, in this section writes: Rabbi Simmon says: When God was about to create man, the angels met together, and some of them said, that he is *not* to be created, because he is pure falsehood ("all men are liars"[1]); and some of them said, he is to be created, because he will do justice (or give alms) and exercise benevolence. Others again said, he is not to be created, because he has no peace and is disposed to quarrel. God then took (the angel of) Truth and cast him down from heaven to earth, and said, "Man is better than ye are! for ye are pure understanding and good inclination itself; ye have no evil propensity, therefore ye *must* always be pious; but man upon earth has (a Yetzer-harrah),[2] an evil imagination which prompts him to evil, and when he becomes pious he is a greater wonder than ye angels are. As to what ye say, that he is full of falsehood, that he will quarrel and will sin, I will do this: I will cause him to die, and his fear of

[1] Ps. cxvi. 11. [2] יצר הרע.

death will cause him to be pious. I will then receive his holy soul again, and will purify it in hell, and then it shall return to its first place under the throne of glory, and thus I shall not lose him finally."

Therefore, says Rabbi Simmon, has God cast down truth from heaven,[1] for truth signifies (by the rule of Notricon) coffin, bier, shrouds; for the first letter of truth is *Aleph*, which is the initial letter of Aron, which signifies coffin; the second letter of truth is *Mem*, the initial letter of Mittah, which means bier; and the third letter of truth is *Thau*, the initial of Tachrichim, that is shrouds.[2] This explains that man is to die; he is then dressed in *shrouds*; he is put in a *coffin;* he is carried on a *bier* to the grave. Therefore has God said: "Man *will* be pious; because he *must die* he will not be proud." With reference to this, our sages have said:

31 *And behold it was very good.* The death of man is *very good;* for the righteous have the real life after their death, under the throne of glory, and with reference to this, Scripture says: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death *unto* His pious ones."[3] That is to say, God would not have created even the pious had there been no death; for even the pious must also sin, but through death he is purified and comes to his rest.

After this the angels said unto God: "Lord of the universe! Why wilt Thou disgrace Thy glorious and express image by casting it down to the earth, where it will be lost?" That is

[1] Ps. lxxxv. 12 (A.V. 11) אמת מארץ תצמח, *i.e.* truth shall spring out of the earth. Rabbi Simmon knew it from the Talmud that ליכא קושטא בעלמא, there was no truth in the world, and yet Scripture says: "Truth shall spring out of the earth." See *Talm. Misc.*, 45 (*e*).

[2] אמת, *i.e.* truth. א—ארון, *i.e.* coffin.
מ—מטה, *i.e.* bier.
ת—תכריכים, *i.e.* shrouds.

A fair explanation of the rule of *Notricon* is to be ound in *Talm. Misc.*, 319, 2. Here it can only be said: *Notricon* is a kind of *Acrostic.*

[3] לחסידיו, Ps. cxvi. 15.

to say, man was created in the form and express image of God. "And now wilt Thou destroy that form by putting man to death —much rather keep Thine express image in heaven above." God replied: "Truth shall spring out of the earth!"[1] that is through truth, which signifies (by the rule of *Notricon*) coffin, bier, shrouds, when man dies he rises again from earth to heaven, as the Talmud says: Three have a share in a man, father, mother, and the Holy One, blessed be He! As soon as a man dies, God says: "Ye parents take your share, and I will take Mine,[2] that is the soul, My express image; it shall return to Me."

Rav Hunna says: Whilst the angels were quarrelling together—some saying, man should be created, and others that he should not be created—God meanwhile created him, and said to the angels: "Why do ye quarrel? The subject about which you quarrel is already made." The thing is like unto a king who has much property and wealth and a great deal of good wine, but he has no guests. What use is to him all his possessions when he cannot make a show of his glory and his wealth? So likewise, though there be many creatures in the world, if man were not in the world, who would recognise the glory and power of God?

*The sixth day.* At the creation of man the Torah (the Law of Moses) has added an extra (letter), He;[3] for God made it a condition, that if Israel will accept and study the Torah, which consists of *five-fifths* (viz.), Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, then the world will retain its existence. This is intimated by the extra He (the value of which is *five*), for everything was created with five, and all on that condition

[1] Ps. lxxxv. 11. [2] *Talm. Misc.*, 66, 64.

[3] Instead of יום ששי it is written יום הששי. The letter He is the definite article, which is prefixed before the "*sixth day*" only, and not before any of the other five days of creation. The letter He has the numerical value of *five*. The commentator bases his remarks on the numerical value of the letter He. See List of Numerical Values at end of Introduction.

above stated. On the first day, *five* lights were created; on the second day, *five* heavens, and *five* times "water" is mentioned on the second day; on the third day *five* sorts of vegetation were created out of the earth; on the fourth day, there were *five* kinds of light—the sun, the moon, the constellations, the stars, and the day (itself), also a light. On the fifth day were created all living beings which have in themselves the power of locomotion in *five* different ways; some walk on two legs, some on four; others creep on their belly; some fly and some swim. On the sixth day man was created, and he has a soul bearing *five* appellations: Nephesh, Ruach, N'shamah, Yekhidah and Khayah.[1]

It is certain that man was created different to all other living creatures, for in all other creatures there is no contending principle, but in man there is. If he wishes to perform a good act the evil imagination in him prevents it; if he be inclined to do evil, then the good propensity prevents it; thus he has all his days a strife within his body.[2]

But why has the Holy One, blessed be He! created man with strife and not with peace? Because He did so in honour of man, that he might have *freewill*. Cattle and beasts have only a propensity to evil and not to good, and therefore it is their nature (that prompts them) to evil; to eat, to drink, and to follow every evil lust. Also the angels have no *freewill*, for they being of a pure understanding, and having an inclination to good only, cannot be otherwise but good. And because there was no creature in the world that was endowed with freewill, therefore God wished to create such an one, and this creature is man, who, like God, can do as he will, and in this particular he resembles God.

[1] נפש, soul. רוח, spirit. נשמה, breath. יחידה, uniting principle, the principles of good and evil; or perhaps "*darling*," Ps. xxii. 20 and xxxv. 17. *Darling*, because of its superiority to the soul of inferior animals. חיה, living principle.

[2] See Rom. vii. 21–23.

Previous to his eating of the tree of knowledge, man had the power of freewill, but his nature was only to do good and not evil; but as soon as he tasted of the tree of knowledge he began to do evil as well as good, and therefore is the tree called "*the tree of knowledge of good and evil*," for he who eats of it hath the knowledge to do both good and evil.

Of no other creature is it said: Let us make (this or that creature) in our image, but of man it is said: "*Let us make man in our image*," that is to say, he shall have the power to do what he will, even as I have the power to do what I will. And it is in honour of man that the Torah has written down, "*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.*" Therefore the angels desired to sing praises before Adam and to worship him, because they heard from God that man has the power to do what he will, just the same as God. But God caused a sleep to fall upon Adam, and proved to the angels that they were superior to Adam; for though he has the power to do what he will, yet a sleep comes upon him, and then he can do *nothing*, neither evil nor good; but *angels never sleep* and can do ever what they please, and therefore are they called *Eerin*,[1] which signifies "*Watchers*," because they are always *awake*.

The cattle and the beasts were created on the sixth day as well as man, because that if man were pious he would be superior to all cattle and beasts; and if not, then he would be inferior to them all, because he has sense to do good and he does evil.[2]

CHAPTER II.—2 *And on the seventh day Goa ended His work.* The term "ended" (in Hebrew) means *longed*.[3] On the seventh day God *longed* that all things which He created in the six days should remain so *for ever*.

3 *And God blessed* the Sabbath, that on it man should have

[1] עירין, Dan. iv. 13. [2] James iv. 17.

[3] כלה, This verb has various meanings, and one of these is "*to pine* with desire," or "anxiously *to long*." See Ps. cxix. 81 and Deut. xxviii. 32.

an *additional soul*[1] more than on week days; and therefore at the close of the Sabbath, when the additional soul makes her exit (from the body), a blessing is pronounced over spices.[2]

*And sanctified it.* God sanctified the Sabbath and did no manner of work on it, "because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." This intimates the six days which refer to the six thousand years during which (period) the world will stand,

In *the first day* the light was created, indicating *the first thousand years* in which Adam lived and was the light of the world; he recognised his Creator.

*The second day* the heaven was created and made, a division between the (upper and lower) waters; alluding to *the second thousand years*, which was the time of Noah, who was separated from the wicked of his time who were drowned in the Deluge. And this is why on the *second day* it was not said "*That it was good*," because the Deluge (in the second thousand years) was intimated by the second day.

On *the third day*, the earth became visible and all trees and fruits fructified. This marks *the third thousand years*, in which Abraham was born and in which his children accepted the Law and the Commandments, which are likened to the fruits of the world.

On *the fourth day* two lights were created, a greater and a lesser, which indicates *the fourth thousand years*, in which there were two temples, a greater and a lesser glory[3] unto Israel.

On *the fifth day* the fowls and the fish in the waters were created, which marks *the fifth thousand years.*

[1] נשמה יתירה, additional soul. See *Treasures of the Talm.*, p. 130, note *b.*

[2] This custom of smelling spices and repeating a blessing over them at the conclusion of the Sabbath, that is on Saturday evening after the appearance of the stars, is strictly observed to this day by every orthodox Jew all over the world. An ornamental kind of smelling box, of gold or silver, containing the spices for that special purpose, is found in every Jewish family.

[3] Comp. Hag. ii. 9.

*On the sixth day* man was created, intimating *the sixth thousand years*, in which the Messiah will come. As Adam the first was created in the image of God, *so likewise the Messiah* ("the last Adam"[1]) *was anointed* of God "and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him."[2] And therefore also people rest on the Sabbath, corresponding to the rest they will have in the days of the Messiah.

The Midrash Rabbah writes in the Sedrah (or Section of the Law): God blessed the Sabbath, and if a man honours it with good cheer God will make him rich. Rabbi Cheyah bar Abba says: I once lodged with a householder at Ludkia, and they brought before him a silver table which took sixteen men to carry, and on which were all things that were created on the six days of the creation. And a child sat in the centre of the table, exclaiming; "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."[3] This exclamation was made in order that the master of the house should not pride himself (on account of his wealth). I asked him, "What merit hast thou that thou shouldest be worthy of such great wealth?" "I was a butcher," he replied, "and each time I had a good beast I set it apart for the Sabbath. Each day from Sunday and onwards I reserved that which was the best for the Sabbath." Then said I unto him: "I well know that on that account God gives good luck[4] and blessing." Likewise he who honours the festivals, him will God reward in this world and will make him rich.[5]

The Midrash Rabbah also writes on this Section, that Rabbi Tanchuma relates a story of a prince, who once sent his servant

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 45. [2] Isa. xi. 2. [3] Ps. xxiv. 1.

[4] מזל. God is here represented to be the author of Mazal, *i.e.* good luck, otherwise it is taught that the *influence of the stars* rules the destinies of man. See *Gen. acc. to the Talmud*, p. 406.

[5] See *Tal. Misc.*, 170, 48, where the same legend, quoted direct from the Talmud, considerably varies from the one quoted here from the Midrash Rabbah. There is no harmony in the Talmud itself, and no unanimity in Jewish books of later date.

on the eve of the Day of Atonement to buy fish. At the fishmongers' a Jewish tailor presented himself, and outbid the prince's servant, and bought up the fish (of the very best quality) for twelve gulden. The servant came home without fish, and his master scolded him. When the prince learnt the cause, he sent for the tailor, and asked him how he dared to outbid his servant, and buy up the fish? The reply of the tailor was: "To-morrow is the day when God pardons the sins which we have committed all the year round; why am I not to rejoice in purchasing the best fish and all other choice eatables?" To this plea the prince replied: "*Thou art right!*" The tailor then went home, and on opening the fish he found in it a costly pearl which secured him a comfortable maintenance for the rest of his life.

Rabbi Eliezer, on behalf of Rabbi Yossi, says: God blessed the Sabbath with a good smell, so that the eatables prepared for the Sabbath smell better than those prepared in week days. Rabbi (the holy) made once a banquet for King Antoninus on a Sabbath, and, though the food set before him was *cold*, the king much enjoyed it. On a subsequent occasion, but on a week day, he again gave a dinner, and set before the king *warm* food. The king said to Rabbi: "Give me rather of the *cold* viands, which I relished much better than these." But Rabbi

[1] A similar legend of a costly jewel found in the belly of a fish is given in *Tal. Misc.*, 160, where it is recorded as follows: "There was once a man named Joseph, who was renowned for honouring the Sabbath day. He had a rich neighbour, a Gentile, whose wealth a certain fortune-teller had said would eventually revert to Joseph the Sabbatarian. To frustrate this prediction, the Gentile disposed of his property, and with the proceeds of the sale he purchased a rare and costly jewel, which he fixed to his turban. On crossing a bridge, a gust of wind blew his turban into the river and a fish swallowed it. This fish being caught, was brought on a Friday to market, and, as luck would have it, it was bought by Joseph in honour of the coming Sabbath. When the fish was cut up, the jewel was found, and Joseph sold it for thirteen purses of gold denarii. When his neighbour met him, he acknowledged that he who despised the Sabbath, the Lord of the Sabbath would be sure to punish."—*Shabbath*, fol. 119A.

said: "The spices needful thereunto are wanting." The king observed: "I have spices enough in my stores." Rabbi then explained that he meant *the Sabbath* as the needful spices, that day being blessed with a good smell.

Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva: "Why is the Sabbath day better than the other days of the week?" "Why," asked Rabbi Akiva in reply, "art thou distinguished more than other people?" "The king has exalted me," answered the other, "and it is his (royal) will that people should honour me." To this, the Rabbi rejoined: "God also wills it that people should honour the Sabbath." The other then asked the Rabbi: "How canst thou prove that *this* day (Saturday) is the Sabbath?" The Rabbi replied: "The river Sambatyon proves it, for it throws up stones all the week, but on the Sabbath it rests." Turnus Rufus then said unto him: "*He who wishes to tell a lie, brings a proof from a distance where no people have ever been, that they should not be able to disprove it.* This is so now; thou bringest a proof from the river Sambatyon,[1] where no one has ever been; probably it

[1] The river Sambatyon referred to in the text is situated in the same locality as that in which the lost Ten Tribes have settled themselves, and Jewish traditions are very full and precise in affirming that this river flows with great noise and violence during six days of the week, but it comes to a stand-still on every Sabbath. The tradition probably took its rise from some poetic conceit, in which the turmoil of the secular week was figured as a mighty river, resting only on the sacred Sabbath. Its very name points to a poetic origin—the Sabbath river. But the Jews have taken it literally, and according to Dr. Neubauer (*Geographie du Talmud*, p. 33), this literal view must have been held as early as the time of Pliny. The learned doctor says: "Nous ne devons pas passer sous silence le fleuve *Sabbatique*. A ce sujet Pline (*Hist. Nat.*, xxxi. 2) est d'accord avec le Midrasch. On dit dans le Midrasch (*Bereschith rabba*, ch. 2) que les eaux ds cette rivière coulent rapidement pendant six jours de la semaine et s'arrêtent le jour du sabbath." A Jew reading this statement of Dr. Neubauer (himself a Jew) would take it as corroborative of the descriptions found in Jewish literature. As recently as 1836, the Rev. Dr. M. Edrehi published in London a work entitled, *An Historical Account of the Ten Tribes settled beyond the River Sambatyon in the East.* It bore the imprimatur of over a hundred English and foreign Jews of high social and literary standing, who apparently experienced no difficulty in believing

is a lie." But Rabbi Akiva adduced another proof that the Sabbath is distinguished more than all other days.[1]

Some sages say: That the Sabbath has been blessed because it has no (other day as a) companion, but all (week) days have a companion. Sunday has Monday as a companion (its equal) Tuesday has Wednesday as a companion; Thursday has Friday for a companion; but the Sabbath has no companion (to equal it).

Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman says: The Sabbath has been blessed, because it is never transferred to another day, as is sometimes the case with a festival day. Even the Day of Atonement[2] is sometimes transferred in order that it should not fall on a Friday or a Sunday; but the Sabbath is never transferred.

The Sabbath pleaded before God: "Why have I not a companion?" And God replied: "Israel will be thy companion." Therefore when Israel came to Mount Sinai, the Sabbath reminded God thus: "Remember the Sabbath day![3] Remember that thou hast promised me that Israel should rest in me and be my companion."[4]

what the Rev. Doctor asserted concerning this extremely orthodox river. Its width, its depth, the character of the stones forming its bed, the noise they make in being tumbled by the current, audible half a league off, are all set forth with minute particularity; and its geographical position is precisely indicated, though it does not appear on any known maps. Not only does the torrent cease, but a fire which descends upon it from heaven all the rest of the week suspends its activity on the Sabbath day.

[1] בעל אוב יוכיח "The necromancer proves it," for he fails in his art on the Sabbath. "Thy father's grave proves it," said Rabbi Akiva to Turnus Rufus; from which the smoke, indicative of the hell-fire by which its tenant is tormented the whole week, ceases to issue on the Sabbath, because even hell rests on that day. *Gen. acc. to the Talmud*, p. 92, 69.

[2] The Day of Atonement itself is observed as a Sabbath, and *more* than a Sabbath, for it is called שבת שבתון Shabbath Shabbathon, *i.e.* a Sabbath of rest, or a sabbatized Sabbath. Lev. xvi. 31, xxiii. 32.

[3] Exod. xx. 8.

[4] The Sabbath is the bride, and Israel the bridegroom. See Liturgical

4 *These are the generations of the heavens.* Why is (the Hebrew word Toldoth) "*Generations*" written in connection with Pharez[1] and also in connection with heaven and earth with two Vaus,[2] whereas of Adam,[3] and everywhere else (Toldoth, *i.e.* generations) is written with one Vau only?[4] The reason is this: When God created "*heaven and earth*" there was no Angel of Death; as to the case of "*Pharez*," there will be no Angel of Death, for from his posterity the Messiah will come, and in the days of the Messiah the Angel of Death will be taken away; hence the term "Generations" (Toldoth in the original) is written with *two Vaus.* With reference to Adam the same term (Toldoth, *i.e.* generations) is written with *one Vau* only, because as soon as man was created, so soon was created also the Angel of Death, who has killed and diminished all the created "generations," and therefore in each case wherever the term "*Generations*" occurs, it is minus *one Vau* (the numerical value of Vau being *six*),[5] which is intended to teach us that six things were diminished from Adam when he sinned: 1. He lost his purity; 2. his life was shortened; 3. his stature was diminished[6]; 4. he became low (morally and physically); 5. the fruits of the earth and the fruits of the trees were cursed (for his sake); and 6. the good light was taken from him; for on Friday morning, when Adam was created, the light began to shine, but two hours before the evening, after Adam had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, God intended to take away

Hymn for Sabbath-eve, commencing לכה דודי, "Come, my beloved, to meet the bride," etc., composed by Solomon Halevy.

[1] Ruth iv. 18.

[2] Vau is the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

[3] Gen. v. 1.

[4] With one *Vau* only, viz., תולדת; and with two *Vaus* תולדות.

[5] See List of the Numerical Values of the Hebrew Letters, at end of Introduction, also *Tal. Misc.*, p. 318, 1.

[6] Adam's stature, when he stood on his legs, reached from the earth to the sky; and when he laid down he reached from one end of the world to the other. But when he sinned, the measure of his height was shortened to one hundred ells only. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 38B, and fol. 100A.

the light, because Adam was not worthy to have such a light, but for the sake of the Sabbath, God did not take it away, and it shone the whole of the Sabbath.

At the close of the Sabbath it became dark, and Adam was frightened. He feared that the serpent would bite him in the dark; but God sent him two fire-stones (probably flint-stones), which, by striking one against the other, produced fire and gave him light. He then blessed God who created the light of the fire; for it was then that (artificial) light was created. Therefore at the close of the Sabbath the *service of the Habhdalah* is performed.[1]

*When they were created.* This world was created with the letter He (ה),[2] which is open at the base like a door wide open, and this teaches us that the whole world must come into hell, in the pit below. But again the letter He (ה) has a small

[1] הַבְדָלָה, *Habhdalah* means *separation*, a domestic religious service separating the Sabbath from the common days of the week. An overflowing cup of wine and a box of spices are held in the right and left hands respectively by the head of the household, whilst the youngest member holds two or three twisted lighted tapers in front of him, a form of prayer being repeated, all standing. A sip of wine is drank by the master, the cup and spice-box then changing hands. A short benediction follows, after which the spice-box is handed round for all to smell. Then a third benediction: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe! who createth the light of the fire." On which the master examines his finger nails in several positions as a charm against evil spirits. This is followed final benediction, in which the Creator is blessed for having made a distinction between "light and darkness," "between Israel and other nations," "between the seventh day and the six days of labour," etc., whereupon a little of the wine is poured on the bare table, and the tapers (Habhdalah) quenched in it, the extinguished tapers being smelt all round, and the spilt wine touched with the fingers and applied to the eyebrows or inside pockets, to bring *good luck* during the coming week.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Habhdalah the joyous hymn המבדיל, Hamabdil, is gleefully sang: The first verse runs thus, "May He who maketh a distinction between the holy (Sabbath) and the profane (days of the week) pardon our sins, and multiply our children and our money as the sand and as the stars of the night." See *Talm. Misc.*, p. 340.

[2] בה׳ בראם.

door[1] open on the (left) side, which indicates that he who (repents and) is pious in this world passes out again through this small door (from hell) into Paradise. The other (future) world was created with the letter Jod (י) the smallest of all letters in the original Hebrew, thus indicating that there be few in the other world, and that the wicked are very low there.

7 *And the Lord God formed man of the dust.* "*And He formed*" is written (in the original Hebrew) with *two* Jods, because man has two natures implanted in him, namely the evil tendency and the good tendency.[3] Of cattle and beasts the term "*And He formed*" is written with one Jod only,[4] because they have a tendency to evil only and none to good.

*Dust from the ground.* During the first hour of the day God collected the dust of the ground, the second hour He kneaded it into a lump, the third hour He covered the same with skin, the fourth hour He put a soul into it, the fifth hour Adam stood upon his legs, the sixth hour he gave names to all creatures, the seventh hour Eve came to him, the eighth hour they went to bed, the ninth hour God commanded them not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, the tenth hour they sinned by eating of the Tree, the eleventh hour God judged them, and the twelfth hour they were expelled from the garden of Eden.[5]

*Dust from the ground.* God took the dust from all the four parts of the world, and of it He created man, in order that when he dies and is buried the earth should (willingly) receive him. He also took some earth from the Altar, that the earth might atone for his sins.[6]

*And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* God said: I

[1] Comp. Luke xvi. 26.

[2] ויייצר instead of ויצר with one Jod only.

[3] יצר הרע ויצר טוב.

[4] ויצר.

[5] Comp. *Talm. Misc.*, p. 158, 17.

[6] This idea is based on Deut. xxxii. 43. See *Gen. acc. to the Talm.*, p. 224, 11.

must see that there be no strife nor jealousy amongst My creatures. For God created on the first day heaven and earth, and when He improved heaven on the second day, and strengthened it, the earth was jealous that she also was not improved and made good. Therefore, on the third day God improved the earth also, by gathering the waters into one place, that the earth might be visible. On the fourth day God further improved the heavens by suspending in them the lights; and on the fifth day He further improved the earth also, and created in its waters fishes and fowls. On the sixth day God said: I must make a compromise between heaven and earth, that they shall feel no jealousy towards each other. Therefore has God taken earth from the earth, and a soul from the angels of heaven, and of both He created man, and thus there was no more any jealousy between them.

The Ramban writes: God gave man a speaking soul, so that he can speak more than all other creatures; for it is the soul from heaven that speaks; therefore has no man power over the soul, since the soul of man is of the Holy Spirit. The soul is likened to God in all kinds of things, and is *better than the angels* and all that is in heaven, and more esteemed, because first created. Hence have the sages said: *The righteous are better than the angels* if they preserve the soul in purity.

8 *And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden.* And two good trees are in the garden; one is called the Tree of Knowledge, because they that eat of its fruit get great understanding of good and evil, and a greater tendency to evil than before; and the other tree is called the Tree of Life, because he who eats of its fruit lives for ever.

*And four rivers went out of the garden to water the garden.* And God placed Adam in the garden to keep it, and to sow wheat and corn and good spices for his wants. And God commanded Adam not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge.

But why did not God prohibit Adam to eat of the Tree of Life? Because, before Adam had sinned God desired that he

should live for ever; but when he sinned, then He prohibited him also eating of the Tree of Life, for by reason of sin he became guilty of death; hence he was expelled from the garden of Eden, that he should not eat and live for ever.

Some of the sages say: The Tree of Life was in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge formed a hedge round it, so that the inner tree could not be touched without first touching the outer one. Therefore, as soon as Adam touched the Tree of Knowledge and ate of its fruit, God immediately expelled him, for Adam intended eating also of the Tree of Life.

The nature of the Tree of Knowledge was such that he who ate of it increased his tendency to do evil. Before they ate of the Tree of Knowledge they were naked, without clothes, and were not ashamed; but when they had eaten of the tree, they were ashamed, and they plucked leaves and covered their shame.

17 *For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* But Adam did not die in that day, because God was merciful to him and granted him a day of *His own days*, the duration of which is a thousand years.[1] Adam (who lived only nine hundred and thirty years)[2] would have lived a full thousand years, but having prophetically seen that King David was to die on the very day of his birth, he made him a present of seventy years of his own, that David might (as he did) live seventy years.

Some of the sages thus explain "*In the day*," etc. God meant in the day (of the week) that thou eatest, on that same day (of the week) thou shalt surely die. He ate on *Friday*, and, after many years, he died on a *Friday*.

Some other sages say, that when God said: "*In the day*," etc. He meant (*conditional*) if he did not repent, as we find in the case of the city of Nineveh; when God sent Jonah to prophesy that it would be overthrown, and after all it was not

[1] Ps. xc. 4. [2] Chap. v. 5.

overthrown, for they *repented*, so likewise was it with Adam—he repented and God delayed his death.

18 *It is not good that man should be alone.* Alone without a wife; for when the other creatures see that Adam is alone, they will hold him to be a god and worship him. They may say: "As God is *One* in heaven, so Adam is *One* on earth;" therefore must a wife be created for him (that he should not be *One* alone); also that she should help him to act, although he (subsequently) ate of the Tree of Knowledge and sinned.

19, 20 *And of the ground the Lord God formed every beast*—and cattle *of the field, and every fowl*—that flieth—*under heaven. And brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.* God brought all creatures to Adam that he should decide what they were to be called, for Adam was very clever; and he named each according to his reason and according to the nature and habit of the animal. He saw the ass to be a great fool without any understanding, he therefore called him *Chamor*, which (in Hebrew) means *clay*, like a lump of clay. The horse he saw to be ever merry, and he called it *Sús*, which means (to leap, to skip, to be) merry. He observed that every ten years the eagle moults his feathers, and therefore he called it *Nesher*, which means "to throw off." Also, because when the eagle is a hundred years old he flies so near to heaven that on account of the heat he is thrown down into the *Great Sea* and is drowned.

21 *And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.* This teaches us that a man should not be continually angry with his wife. When he occasionally sees something which does not please him, he should comport himself as if he were asleep and did not see. When God brought all creatures before Adam to give them names, Adam saw that every beast and the cattle had a wife; and he said all the creatures have wives, but I have none; and therefore it is said (in ver. 20), "But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him;"—

that is to say: Adam found of none of the creatures a female that would suit him for a wife; therefore "the Lord God—caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he took one of his ribs" from his body, and out of that He created a wife for him.

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, that she might not disgust him, because she came out of his body. When man is meritorious, God gives him a wife dear and helpful to him; but when he is not pious, God sends him a wife like unto his own body, causing him to lose both this world and the next. She is then worse than bitter death.[1] A good wife brings the husband to (Olam Habba) the world to come, as we learn from the story of a certain (Chassid) pious man, who had a very pious wife. In consequence of having had no children by her, he divorced her.[2] She then married a wicked husband, whom she made pious (and fit for the world to come); and he married a wicked wife, who made him wicked (and fit for hell).

22 *And the rib . . . made he a woman.* Rabbi Joshua, on behalf of Rabbi Levi, says: God deliberated from what member (of Adam's body) He should create a woman, and He reasoned with Himself thus: I must not create her from Adam's head, for she would be a proud person and hold her head high. If I create her from the eye, then she will wish to pry into all things; if from the ear, she will wish to hear all things; if from the mouth, she will talk much; if from the heart, she will envy all people; if from the hand, she will desire to take to herself all things; if from the feet, she will be a gadabout. Therefore will I create her from the member which is hid, that is the rib, which is not seen even when man is naked. Yet for all these (careful precautions) she has all these faults. I have not created her from the head, yet she holds her head high, as Scripture says: "The daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with stretched forth necks;" nor

[1] Ecc. vii. 26. [2] See *Talm. Misc.*, p. 135, 16.

from the eye, yet she wishes to see all things, as the same Scripture says: "And wanton eyes."[1] I have not created her from the ear, yet she hears what she ought not to hear; nor from the heart, yet she envies all people. I have not created her from the hand, yet she loves to take all things; nor from the feet, yet she gads about. * * * *

Rabbi Joshua asked: Why must a female perfume herself and dress better than man? They answered him: Adam was made of earth, and earth never spoils; but Eve being made of a rib, and flesh if it be not salted soon putrifies, therefore must women perfume themselves and dress well. For this reason also have women good voices, because woman was made of bone, and if you strike one bone against another it sounds and echoes, but beat earth against earth it produces no sound. And for this reason also can a woman in anger be pacified *less easily* than a man, because she is of bone, and you may all day long pour water on a bone; it will not melt; but pour water on earth and in a little while it softens. Hence the saying: "As a *father* pitieth his children;"[2] for a father pitieth his children more than a mother. Therefore also does a man search for a wife, and a woman does not search for a husband. Because woman was taken from man, he must search after her; for instance, he who loses anything must seek for it; but a woman lost nothing, and she need not seek.[3] Likewise do women run to funerals more eagerly than do men, because they brought death into the world. And God gave women the precepts of separation, because they have shed blood. Also the precept of the dough was given them, because woman caused Adam to sin, who was separated from the earth as a first cake is separated from the dough.[4] This is also the reason why women light and bless the candles on Sabbath-eve, because she extinguished the light of Adam, that is his soul, which shines as a light.

[1] Isa. iii. 16.
[2] Ps. ciii. 13.
[3] *Niddah*, fol. 31B.
[4] Num. xv. 20, 21.

24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife.* Because she is his flesh and bone. Woman is strong by nature, because she was created of bone; but man is weak by nature, because he was created of earth, and earth is weak, for it soon dissolves.

25 *And they were both naked.* Like the cattle.

CHAPTER III.—6 *That the tree was good for food.* Some of the sages say, that it was a fig tree, and that was why they (Adam and Eve) plucked the leaves from the fig tree to cover their shame; for as soon as they had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, their eyes were opened, and they were ashamed to go about naked. But some sages say, that the tree was a vine. She (Eve) pressed the grapes and gave him red wine to drink as red as blood. Yet some other sages say, that it was a citron tree.

And the serpent was very wicked, and wishing that Adam might die, he made a pretext, and asked: (ver. 1) "*Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" But he knew that God had only forbidden the Tree of Knowledge, and this (question) was merely his pretext to draw them into conversation. Eve replied, "God has only forbidden us to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, and moreover to *touch it.*" The sages say: We must not speak that which God has not commanded, for God had not forbidden touching the tree, but simply not to eat of it. Eve added to it and told a lie, and she was therefore brought to commit a sin, for the serpent went and pushed Eve's hand to the Tree of Knowledge, and said unto her, "As thou hast not died from touching it, so likewise wilt thou not die from eating it (ver. 5). *For God doth know* that when ye eat of the tree ye will be like angels, and that is the reason that He has forbidden you to eat of it."

Eve thought the serpent spoke very reasonably, and that it is good we should eat of the tree, for our eyes will then be opened, and we shall be like angels. After eating of it herself, she gave to Adam to eat, for she thought within herself:

If I die, let my husband also die, that he may not take another wife.

She gave also all cattle, beasts and fowls to eat (of the tree), in order that they also should die. All creatures did eat, except one bird, called Khol, which would not eat of the tree. Rabbi Yuddin, on behalf of Rabbi Simeon, says: That the bird Khol lives a thousand years, and after that period his body shrinks, he throws off his feathers, and becomes as small as an egg, and then he begins to grow and becomes very large again.[1]

7 *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked;* and they plucked leaves from the fig tree and covered their shame. Two hours before night they heard the voice of God, and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. In order not to frighten them, God pretended that He knew not where they were, and therefore asked: "Where are ye?" Adam replied and said,

10 *I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.* And God said: "Whence knowest thou that it is a shame to go about naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree?" And Adam said,

12 *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* God questioned the woman, "Why

[1] The *Midrash Rabbah* (*Bereshith*, fol. 22A), bases the legend of this fabulous bird Khol on the following passage in Job xxix. 18: "I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days" as כחול, Khol (A.V. as the sand). Yanai says, the bird lives a thousand years, at the end of which time a fire arises in its nest and consumes it and the bird together; yet something remains of the size of an egg out of which the bird springs into new life again. In the Talmud (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 108B) another immortal bird is mentioned, named אורשינה, Orshinah, which, on seeing Noah so much troubled and fatigued by his daily exertions in feeding such a vast number of animals that were with him in the ark, abstained altogether from food out of compassion to him. Noah, appreciating the sweet sympathy of the bird, blessed it, and said: יהא רעוא דלא תמות, May it please God that thou shouldst never die, as it is written: "And I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand" (Job xxix. 18).

hast thou eaten of the tree which I told thee not to eat?" The woman said, "The serpent persuaded me." And God said to the serpent,

14 *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field.* * * * *

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Two questions might be asked on this subject. One question is, Why did Eve tell a lie to the serpent? God had forbidden to eat of the tree, but He had not forbidden to touch it. Still more it is difficult (to understand), the serpent pushed Eve's hand to the tree, and said unto her, "As thou didst not die in consequence of having touched it, so likewise shalt thou not die when thou eatest of it;" why did Eve believe the serpent and immediately eat of the tree? Perhaps she would have died for touching it before the day was out, for God said: "*In the day . . . thou shalt surely die.*" But Eve ate immediately, before the day was out; she ought to havewaited till it was ended, and if she did not then die for touching, she might have eaten. Another question may beasked: God said to Adam, "Why hast thou eaten of the tree?" And he replied, "the woman gave it to me." What excuse is this? because the woman gave it to him should he therefore be free? But *God had forbidden it!*

The Ramban writes: Adam said unto God, "Thou hast given me a wife to be a help, and I thought what she bids me I must do, therefore have I eaten from her own hands." On this it might be asked: Was Adam such a fool as to obey his wife when God prohibited him? But the explanation is this: Adam and Eve fancied that the only reason why God had forbidden them to eat of the Tree of Knowledge was because the Tree was in *a very sacred spot, where the Shechinah rested.* And the reason why the Tree of Knowledge stood in the midst of the garden was, because it is customary for kings to reside in *the midst* of the land. Thus also the Shechinah dwelt in *the midst* of the garden. Adam and Eve reasoned within themselves, that God had forbidden them to eat of the tree simply

to prevent its being touched, for the eating would necessarily bring them in contact with it; but should the apple fall off the tree and roll out from the sacred spot, it might well be eaten, for God would not keep back that which was good for man, such for instance as the Tree of Knowledge was, by means of which one might obtain a good understanding.

But Adam thought that God had forbidden (the eating), because the Tree of Knowledge stood in a sacred spot where no man dare approach. And he mistook the text "*Thou shalt not eat of it*"; he thought the meaning to be "Thou shalt not eat of it" when the apple is *on* the tree, but when the apple drops off from the tree, and rolls out from the holy place, it may well be eaten; and this is why the woman said to the serpent, "But of the tree which is *in the midst* of the garden," that is to say, because it stands on a holy spot, *in the midst*, as a king residing *in the midst* of the land, so also does the Shechinah rest *in the midst*, therefore we must not eat of it, and therefore said the woman to the serpent: "God has forbidden *to touch* the tree;" for they thought, it was that which God meant. This being so, the woman, according to her belief, did not tell a lie. The serpent said to the woman: "Thou hast said according to thy belief, but thou art mistaken; God begrudges you the good: that is, ye would become like angels, and therefore has He forbidden you to eat of the Tree of Knowledge;" and the woman believed him, and hence says the text: "*When the woman saw that the tree was good*," and she thought that God did not wish to give them that which is good for people. But Adam did not think so. He fancied, God holds the spot as very holy and therefore has He forbidden; and hence he pleaded before God and said: "I have not been on the holy spot, I have not touched it; the woman plucked (the fruit) of the tree and gave it to me; and therefore I am not guilty of death." And this is why he did not die on that day, for he did not commit the sin willingly. He thought, I may not *touch* but I *may* eat.

Because Adam did not die, Eve also did not die, in order that he should not be left *alone* without a wife. Another extenuating plea did Adam advance: "The woman which thou hast given me for help, that I may be able to study the Law, while she should order the house, and cook and bake, so that I should have no need to ask her whether she cooks lawful food or not, but I must rely on her (that all she does is lawful and right)—*she* gave me to eat of the tree, and I was not in duty bound to ask her what kind of apple she gave me; I thought it was another (ordinary) apple."

*And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?* (ver. 13). Although God had not forbidden the woman to eat, yet he questioned her, because she was attached to the body of Adam; for God took one of his ribs of which He created the woman. God first questioned Adam and Eve about their act, and then He punished and cursed them; but the serpent He did not question "What hast thou done?" for He would not hear from him an excuse, and He cursed him immediately. From this have our sages deduced: When one causes his fellow to fall into sin, he is punished more than his fellow.

*Upon thy belly shalt thou go.* For the serpent had (originally) four feet, and God sent His angels who chopped them off.

15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman.* The serpent seduced Eve and not Adam, because women are easily persuaded, and because she would be able soon to persuade her husband.

16 *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.* * * * * The curse with which Eve was cursed[1] is common to all women; even the wives of princes are subject to this sorrow, and riches is of no avail against it, and this because Eve transgressed willingly. * * * *

Although the woman is subject to her husband and must

[1] The Talmud says: "*Ten* curses were uttered against Eve." *Tal. Misc.*, p. 132.

obey his orders, as a slave a master's, so that she has no need to desire that her husband should rule over her as a lord over his servant, the text nevertheless says: "*And thy desire shall be to thy husband.*"[1]

18 *And thou shalt eat the herb of the field.* Before they sinned they ate of all good herbs *in* the garden, but afterwards God prevented them eating except of that which grew in the field (*outside* the garden).

19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* Had they not sinned they would have eaten wheat unground, which would have been as good and as wholesome as bread. * * * * *

20 *And Adam called his wife's name Eve.* Although he at first named her "*Woman,*" because she was taken out of man,[2] now, because she had caused him to sin, he would not that she should have the honour to be called after him, and he called her Eve, which means "*the mother of all living,*" for all living people spring from her.

21 *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin.* And on these coats were painted all beasts and birds of the world, and Adam gave these coats to Cain. When he was killed these coats came into the hands of Nimrod. Esau killed Nimrod and got possession of them, and they were worn by Jacob when he went to Isaac to obtain the blessing.

*And clothed them.* Although they had sinned, yet was God merciful, "*and clothed them*" in the coats.

23, 24 *Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man.* God said to Adam, "Thou must till

[1] This passage is very obscure. Possibly it means this: Although the woman has much to endure from her husband, she does not dislike him, but still desires to have him; or, although she might escape much pain and trouble by remaining single, he so rules over her that she forgets her fears and herself, and is more desirous of marrying him than he is of marrying her. See *Gen. acc. to the Talm.*, p. 124, 32.

[2] Chap. ii. 23.

the ground *outside* the garden of Eden just the same as thou didst till *within* the garden of Eden, for thou wert taken from the earth which is *outside* the garden." Thus Adam immediately left the garden to till the ground outside; but as he intended to re-enter the garden again, the Holy One, blessed be He! locked the door of the garden, that he should not be able to do so.

*And He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim.* God stationed in front of the garden the destroying angels, who had swords in their hands, so that no creature should be able to enter it.

CHAPTER IV.—1 *And Adam knew Eve his wife.* This took place while he was yet *in* the garden of Eden. Rabbi Eleazar the son of Azariah says: Three wonders occurred on that day. 1, He was created on that day; 2, on the same day they came together; and 3, on it they had begotten children.

* * *

*And (Eve) said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.* I have gotten a child *with* God. God Himself created us, but now I and my husband have also a share in the child; for *three* have a part in a child; the father, the mother, and God, He gives the soul.[1]

2–5 *And she again bare his brother Abel,* etc. Abel fed sheep and Cain tilled the ground. Cain brought fruit as an offering unto God, and Abel of the best of his sheep for an offering. God sent a fire from heaven and consumed the offering of Abel, but the offering of Cain God would not accept, because the best fruit he ate himself and the worst he brought for an offering. Then Cain was angry, because God would not accept his offering.

6, 7 *And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou angry?* etc. If thou wilt be pious and repent, I will pardon thee; if however thou wilt not repent, thou shalt be condemned to the door of hell, where thou shalt rest (or abide). The Yetzer-

[1] See *Tal. Misc.*, p. 66, 61.

harrah (*i.e.* the natural propensity to evil) shall have his desire unto thee to entice thee to evil. And this is the meaning of "*Sin lieth at the door*," by the door of hell shalt thou rest (or lie).[1]

Rabbi Ammi says: The Yetzer-harrah (*i.e.* Satan or the Devil)[2] invariably goes in the middle of the street and in the middle of the road, and as soon as he meets a man fashionably dressed, he joins him, and says: "*Thou art mine*, I will teach thee right well;" and he entices him to all evil. Therefore, let a man not indulge in superfluous ornaments, so that the Yetzer-harrah should have no dominion over him.

8 *And it came to pass when they were in the field*, the two brothers began to quarrel, and they said, "Let us divide the world between us." One said, "The ground on which thou standest is *mine*;" and the other said, "The ground on which *thou* standest is mine." One said, "The (future) Temple shall be situated on *my* portion of ground," and the other said the same; and thus they quarrelled together. And with Abel, the *younger* son, were born *two* daughters, his sisters; (with Cain was born only *one* sister;) and Cain said, "I will take thy second sister for a wife, because I am the *first-born*;" Abel said, "I will have her, for she was *born with me*." As they thus quarrelled, Abel threw Cain to the ground and sat upon him. Cain said to Abel, "We are but two sons to our father, why wilt thou kill me?" Abel had compassion on him and released him; hence says the text:

[1] In the Talmud we have the following on this text. God said to Israel: I have created the tempter, and his antidote, the Law. If you engage in the study of the latter, you are not delivered into the hands of the former; as it is written: "If thou doest well, שאת, *i.e.* thou art exalted above him; if not, thou art delivered into his hands:" as it is said: "Sin lieth at the door." Moreover, the tempter is always bent upon leading thee astray; for it it said: "And unto thee shall be his desire;" but if thou wilt study the Law, "thou shalt rule over him." (*Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, p. 169, 7). [2] Satan, Evil Imagination, and the Angel of Death, are the same person. *Ibid.*, p. 195, iii..

*Cain rose up.* That is to say, he was lying under and (when released) he rose up. Cain rose up and slew Abel.

And whence did Cain learn how to slay Abel? The sages say, he saw how Adam slaughtered oxen for sacrifice by cutting their throats; and by the throat he slew Abel.

And *who* buried Abel? Rabbi Eliezer the son of Pidoth says: The clean birds and the clean beasts buried him, and on that account God has given them a good reward, that one blessing should be pronounced when they are slaughtered, and another blessing when their blood is covered with dust; for God rewards *measure for measure.* Because they covered the blood of Abel, therefore has God commanded that their blood should be covered. [1]

9, 10 *And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; am I my brother's keeper?* And God said unto him, "Thou wicked man, *the voice of thy brother's bloods cry unto Me from the ground.*" It is said in the (original) text "Thy brother's *bloods*," [2] because (it includes) the blood of thy brother and the blood of his children which would have been born of him (to the end of the world). [3] But some of the sages say: It is written *bloods* in the plural, because Cain wounded him in many parts, for he did not know in what (particular) part he could kill him. He slew him because he thought that the most essential portion of the world would come out from *him*, because God accepted his offering, and the offering of Cain He did not accept. And God said unto Cain,

11 *And now art thou cursed from the earth.* Thou shalt be cursed *more than the earth*, [4] for the earth was also cursed on account of *receiving* the blood of Abel.

[1] Lev. xvii. 13.

[2] It is not said: דם in the singular, but דמי in the plural, *bloods;* also the verb צעקים, *they cry*, is plural.

[3] Comp. *Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, p. 173, 10.

[4] מן has sometimes a *comparative* meaning, and the commentator takes advantage of it here.

12 *When thou tillest the ground* it shall yield unto thee less corn than it otherwise would have done, because thou hast slain thy brother. "*A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be;*" as a penitent shalt thou not rest in one place.

13 *And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.* Cain said: "Lord of the Universe! are my sins *so* great that Thou canst not pardon them?"

14 *Behold, thou hast driven me out! . . . every one that findeth me shall slay me.* Rabbi Yehudah says: The cattle and the beasts and the fowls came to take vengeance on him. But God said,

15 *Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken sevenfold;* that is to say, God rebuked the cattle and the beasts and the fowls and the serpent, that they should do him no harm.

*Vengeance shall be taken sevenfold.* In seven generations hence shall vengeance be taken *on Cain*, for Lamech will come and slay him.

*And the Lord set a mark upon Cain*, that people should not kill him. Rav says: God gave him a dog to preserve him from wild beasts. Rabbi Yossi says: He caused a horn to grow out of his forehead. Some say: God wrote a letter of His own name on his forehead, that all should be afraid of him, and should not kill him.

16 *And Cain went out*, very merry; and Adam met him and asked him the nature of his sentence. Cain replied, "I have repented, and therefore my sentence is light." Adam distressed himself, that he had not known that the power of repentance was so great, and immediately he uttered (the Psalm which commences) "A Psalm for the Sabbath day," in which it is said: "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord."[1]

*And dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.* Adam

[1] Ps. xcii. 1. According to the Talmud, Adam was one of the ten elders who contributed to the book of the Psalms. *Treasures of the Tal.*, p. 51.

dwelt on the eastern side of the garden of Eden, because the *eastern side*[1] receives (or accepts) the people who wish to repent.

Some say, *the land of Nod* means, wherever Cain went the earth *shook* under him, so that people said unto him, "*Move on*, for thou art sinful, thou hast killed thy brother."

19 *And Lamech took unto him two wives.* It was customary in his time for every man to have two wives,—one to bear children, whilst to the other he gave a drug of herbs in order that she should not bear children, and retain her beauty. * * * *

*The name of one was Adah*, which signifies *to remove* (or temporary separation), *and the name of the other Zillah*, which signifies *shade;* he ever sat in her shade.

20, 21 *And Adah bare Jabal.* He was the first who pastured cattle in the field. *And his brother's name was Jubal.* He was the first who made harps and fiddles.

22 *And Zillah also bare.* * * * * God caused her to have children, and she bare a son, whose name was Tubal-cain, which signifies, he improved the trade of Cain; for Cain was a murderer, and Tubal-cain made swords for the world to murder people with.

23 *And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, hear my voice.* "Listen and be re-united to me;" for the wives separated themselves from him because he killed Cain and Tubal-cain. For Lamech was blind, and Tubal-cain was leading him about; and when Tubal-cain saw Cain walking at a distance in the field, and mistook him for a wild beast, he said to Lamech, "Take thy bow and shoot, for there goes a beast;" and Lamech took his bow and shot his grandfather Cain dead. When Lamech became aware of this he was so frightened that

[1] In most Jewish houses, and invariably in every synagogue, the eastern side is indicated in a particular manner, so that every Jew knows the direction towards which he is to turn his face during the repetition of certain portions of his daily worship. For further particulars, see *Treasures of the Tal.*, p. 299.

he clapped his hands together and killed his son Tubal-cain between them. For this cause his wives separated themselves from him. He excused himself and said, "Have I then killed them willingly? My grandfather killed Abel wilfully, and God let him live for seven generations, how much longer will God wait in my case?" But his wives would not listen to him. Lamech then went to Adam and complained against his wives, and Adam said unto them, "Ye should not speak against the Divine decree; do ye your part and re-unite yourselves to your husband." They replied to Adam, "Thou lecturest us, but why dost thou not re-unite thyself to *thy* wife? It is now one hundred and thirty years since thou separatedst thyself from her and didst eat of the Tree of Knowledge." And immediately Adam had a son, and called his name Seth.

CHAPTER V.—24 *And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.* God took him alive into heaven. He did not die, for he was a great Tsaddick (saint); God took him from the world so soon that he should not commit sin, but should continue in his piety. God took him alive into heaven, that he should bear witness against the people that were *before* the Deluge; again God took alive into heaven Elijah the prophet, that he should bear testimony against the people that were *after* the Deluge. And this is why Scripture records of each of the generations from Adam until Noah, "*And he died,*" to show that all these men were righteous, and died in their beds, and did not perish in the Deluge. But of the generations from Noah and onwards the Scriptures had no need to record "*And he died,*" because there was not a Deluge; but it is simply recorded that they begat sons and daughters, and how long they lived.

29 *And he called his name Noah.* Noah was the tenth generation from Adam, and this is why from Noah and onwards the world has remained in existence; and also why it is that of no one till Noah is it stated, "*And he begat a son,*" whilst of Noah *it is* said (vayoled *ben, i.e.*) "And he begat a son," for

*ben* sounds *bin*-yan (*i.e.* building), that is to say, from Noah is the world *built.* And he was called Noah, because Noah means *rest,* and till Noah the earth produced thorns, but when Noah came he made iron ploughs to plough the ground, and the ground *rested* from the curse and produced everything that is good.

CHAPTER VI.—1[1] *And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born unto them.* The Midrash Rabbah writes: Rabbon Gamliel gave his daughter a husband, and when she was about to leave her father's house she said to him, "Bless me." He blessed her and said: "God grant thou shouldst never come again into my house!" She then said unto him, "Dear father, why cursest thou me?" He replied, "I have blessed thee, that it should be so well with thee at thy husband's, that thou shouldest have no desire to return to my house." After this the daughter begat a son, and she said to her father, "Bless my son." He blessed the child, and said to his daughter, "May (the exclamation) *Woe!* never depart from thy mouth, that thou shouldest continually cry out, *Woe!*" She said to him, "Why cursest thou me?" He replied, "I have blessed thee; that is to say, Thou shouldest give attention to thy son, and shouldest always say, Woe is me, I have not given food to my son! Woe is me, I have not let him go to his teacher."[2]

The wife of Rabbi Shimon gave birth to a daughter, and when Rabbi Chiyah met him, he said, "God has *begun* to bless thee, as it is said in the text: 'And it came to pass when men *began* to multiply on the earth, *and daughters were born* unto them,' that is to say, *after the daughter* thou wilt multiply many children,[3] which is a blessing."

[1] The following comment on verse 1 is placed after verse 6 in the original, but I have here put it in its rightful order.

[2] Such exclamations as these are often heard among Polish Jewesses on various occasions to this very day. "*Ei, wehe mir!*" ("Ah! woe is me.")

[3] If the first child be a daughter, it is a good omen to the family. *Bava-*

2 *And the sons of God saw the daughters of men.* And the princes and magistrates saw the beautiful daughters and took them away from their husbands to be wives for themselves. If *princes and magistrates* do so, what have others (not) done?

3 *My spirit shall not also strive with man, for that he also is flesh.* God said, "I have created man with a soul, as the angels, but now I see that they are but flesh and blood like the cattle, and the soul helps them nothing, and therefore shall they not be like angels, but shall die like cattle. Yet I will let them live *an hundred and twenty years*, perhaps they will repent; and if not, I will bring on them the Deluge."

4 *There were giants on the earth.* There were angels that fell down from heaven upon the earth, for God had cast them down because they were evil, and from them descended the giants.

6 *And it comforted*[1] *the Lord that He had made man on the earth.* And God comforted Himself that He had created man *upon* the earth, for had He created him *in heaven* He would have been obliged to cast him down (from thence) on account of his sins; but *on earth* was his *right place.*

*And it grieved Him at His heart.* The holy and blessed One was grieved that the world should be destroyed. An idolater once asked Rabbi Joshua, the son of Korcha: "God certainly knowing all things, why created He man, when He knew that he would be wicked?" Rabbi Joshua answered him: "Thou hast had a son and rejoiced when he was born, and yet thou must have known that he would die; why didst thou rejoice?" The idolater replied: "When there is an occasion of joy, one should rejoice; and when of grief, one should grieve: 'To everything there is a season.'"[2] Rabbi Joshua said unto him: "God has done so likewise; He knew that

*Bathra*, fol. 141 B; *i.e.* if a daughter is born *first*, it is a sign that sons, and *many* of them, are to follow.

[1] נחם means *to comfort* as well as *to repent*, or *to regret.* The commentator chose the first meaning, as it suited his fancy best, and also a purpose.

[2] Eccles. iii. 1.

the righteous would descend from the wicked, and therefore created He the wicked for the sake of the righteous."[1]

7 *Both man and beast.* God said: "If man is to be destroyed, beast must also be destroyed, for the beasts were created for the sake of man."

END OF THE FIRST SECTION.

9 *These are the generations of Noah.* King Solomon, peace be upon him, says: "The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him."[2] He means by this, that a man should perform the precepts for God's sake, and not for self-exaltation, as many people who give alms, and then go and tell it to other people; thus they do a twofold evil: first, they exalt and boast themselves of it; and, secondly, the poor man is put to shame, by the divulging that he receives charity. "Therefore," says Solomon, "the just man walketh in his integrity," as a simple-minded man, and one that is humble, and does not exalt himself; such a man is a just man, and so is worthy that his children should be as pious as himself. Solomon says: "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness; but a faithful man who can find?"[3] There are many who proclaim the charity and the goodness they do; but a pious, faithful man, who can find him? It is acknowledged that there are three degrees in the just. If he be pious, he is called *a just man;* if more pious, then he is called *perfect;* and the third degree is *walking*, *i.e.* he walks entirely and continually with God. And these three degrees were in Noah, as the text says:

*Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.* He was just and perfect in his heart, he did not speak against the works of the Holy One, blessed be He! but walked entirely and continually with God.

Noah is mentioned *three times* (in this one text). Because,

[1] Comp. Rom. iii. 8. [2] Prov. xx. 7. [3] *Ibid.*, xx. 6.

he saw first the world built over with cities and populated; then he saw it destroyed in the Deluge; and thirdly, he saw it rebuilt with cities and people.

*In his generations.* This means, when all people were wicked, he was just in his generations; how much more just would he have been among pious people. But some sages say the reverse: In *his* generations he was counted for just, but in the generation of Abraham he would not have been thought of as just, for Abraham was more pious than he. And the Torah (Scripture) tells us how pious Noah was, for on account of his piety God saved him from the Deluge.

11 *And the earth was filled with violence.* All people committed robbery.

12 *For all flesh had corrupted his way.* That is to say, all creatures committed adultery. * * * And they also worshipped idols.[1]

13 *For the earth is filled with violence.* On account of robbery (violence) God sealed the decree (for destruction). Although adultery and idolatry are worse than robbery, yet God sealed the decree on account of robbery, because *reason* says one should not rob, though the Torah (Law) has not forbidden it. Again, adultery and idolatry are sinful against God only, because God has forbidden it; but robbery is sinful both against God and man.

And therefore came the Deluge, because people would not believe that God could renew the world, and also would not believe that God cares for man, returning a good reward to the righteous, and an evil reward to the wicked; for they said: "God is in heaven, and gives no attention to man; it is all the same whether one is pious or wicked;" and therefore God brought the Deluge. But Noah and his children remained, which shows us that God gives a good reward to the just, and an evil reward to the unjust.

[1] The text does not say who worshipped idols, and we are left to infer it from the context.

14 *Make thee an ark of gopher wood.* God ordered a great ark to be made, as a great ship upon the water, and to be pitched within and without with pitch. God could have delivered the just Noah and his children without the ark; but God ordered the building of the ark 120 years, in order that people should ask Noah, "What doest thou?" and he would tell them, that God would bring a deluge, and they would perhaps repent (in consequence).

The Rabbi B'chai writes: Why did not Noah pray that the world should not be destroyed; as we find of Abraham, as soon as God told him about the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he prayed several times on behalf of the wicked; and as also did the prophets? (Reply) Noah having seen that there were not ten righteous in his generation, could not pray on their behalf that they should be spared alive, as also Abraham, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, could not pray for less than ten righteous. Another explanation why Noah did not pray on their behalf is: because God warned them 120 years that they should be godly, and they took no heed.

15 *And thus thou shalt make it.* God ordered the length of the ark to be 300 cubits, the breadth of it 50 cubits, and the height of it 30 cubits; and a window to admit light. There were in the ark three storeys, one over the other; the uppermost storey was for man, the second for cattle and beasts and fowls; and the lower for dung.

18 *And with thee will I establish my covenant.* God said unto Noah, "I will keep my oath with thee, that the fruit and the corn shall not rot in the ark, and that the wicked should not slay thee on account of the ark, and that thou with thy children with the women shall enter into the ark." * * *

19 *And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort.* God commanded Noah to take into the ark of every creature *male and female*, but only such of the cattle and beasts and fowls which did not connect themselves with strange species.

And the cattle, the beasts, and the fowls came on their own accord, and such as the ark admitted to enter, such were for certain good (*i.e.* true and faithful to their species).[1] And Noah was obliged to bring provisions into the ark, that all creatures should have enough to eat and to drink.

CHAPTER VII.—1 *For thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation.* (The phrase) "A just man, and perfect," is not repeated here, in order to teach us that a man should not be much praised in his presence.

2 *By sevens.* God ordered of the clean cattle and fowls by sevens, in order to bring sacrifices of the same.

*The male and his female.* The Torah writes of cattle, "*husband and wife*,"[2] as of human beings, because they begat children; but of fowls the Torah writes (verse 3) "*male and female*,"[3] because they do not bear children as human beings, but lay eggs and hatch chickens.

4 *For yet seven days.* God delayed the Deluge for seven days, in order that proper mourning should be observed for Methuselah the righteous, who died at that time.

*I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights.* * * * * The Gemara says in Zevachim,[4] that *all* creatures were *in* the ark, but how could the unicorn be *in* the ark, since that beast was so very great?[5] The sages say, that Noah fastened the horns of the beast to the ark on the *outside.* The Gemara mentions that Rav Chisda had said, that the waters were as hot as fire, and asks how it is that the unicorn was not scalded? The Gemara (itself) replies: The waters round about the ark were cool.

7 *Because of the waters of the flood.* Noah continued to think that God would (after all) not bring the Deluge, and therefore he did not enter the ark till the (steadily increasing) waters compelled him to do so.

[1] כל שהתיבה קולטתו בידוע שלא נעבדה בהם עבירה. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 108B. [2] איש ואשתו. [3] זכר ונקבה.

[4] Fol. 113B. [5] As large as Mount Tabor, *Ibid.*

8 *And of beasts that are not clean.* The text (verse 2), says: "And of the beasts that are not clean, thou shalt take by two, the husband and his wife."[1] Our sages ask: Why does the Torah (Scripture) speak of a beast that is not clean in a circuitous manner, it might have said in a shorter way, *an unclean beast?*[2] (Reply) The Torah teaches us, not to speak evil with the mouth when good can be spoken; for the Torah did not wish to use (the word) *unclean*, because that is indecent language, and therefore it says, "*That are not clean.*" Man should specially be warned not to utter with the mouth indecent language, for indecent language defiles the soul.

9 *They went in . . . unto Noah.* All creatures came of their own accord unto Noah, and those which the ark admitted remained in it.

At first the rain descended gently, in order that the people might be led to repentance; but afterwards, when God saw that they did not repent, He sent upon them much rain and hot water, so that all were scalded therein.

13 *In the selfsame day.* In the *clear day*, at midday, Noah entered the ark; for the wicked people said: "When Noah enters the ark we will kill him, he must die with us." But God said, "In the *middle* of the day I shall make him enter the ark."

16 *And the Lord shut him in.* God protected him, that neither the waters, nor the wicked, should do him any injury.

Some sages say: God did not permit the sun and the moon and the stars to shine for a whole twelve months, and as Noah could not see in the dark God sent him a precious stone which shone as a great light. And when the wicked saw that they were perishing, they wanted to upset the ark with Noah in it. But God sent lions and bears and other wild beasts, and they killed the wicked.

[1] איש ואשתו.

[2] The difference in the Hebrew between the word "unclean," and the phrase "that are not clean," consists in eight letters.

God caused first the death of all the cattle and the beasts and the fowls, and afterwards He caused the death of man, because man was created last, and therefore he remained to the last. God did so that man might be led to repentance. The Gemara in Bava Bathra asserts[1] just the contrary. Rabbi Ammi says: Man was created last, but in the Deluge he perished first, as it is written (in ver. 23): "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle." *Man first, cattle last.*

20 *Fifteen cubits upwards.* At first the waters were level with the mountains, but afterwards they were fifteen cubits higher than all mountains.

22 *All in whose nostrils was the breath of life.* From this we learn, when man dies his soul comes out from the nose. God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the soul of life,[2] and through the nostrils the soul comes out again.

*Of all that was in the dry land died.* But the fish in the water were preserved, for they took refuge in the ocean which surrounds the whole world.

23, 24 *And Noah only remained, and they that were with him in the ark.* "Noah only;" "*only*" implies *diminution;* for Noah was once late in feeding a lion, and the lion (to remind him) came and bit him and thus diminished his blood.

*And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.*

CHAPTER VIII.—1 *And God remembered Noah,* and the cattle and the beasts and quieted the waters. Our Rabbi B'chai asks: Why were not (here) the *fowls* mentioned? The answer is, because the cattle and the beasts were created with man on the sixth day, and He therefore remembered them with man.

4 *And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.* The Ramban writes: At first it rained forty days, during which the waters

[1] Fol. 61A. [2] See chap. ii. 7.

increased daily till they became fifteen cubits higher than all the mountains, and then the fountains and the windows of heaven were opened, and the waters in their force continued one hundred and fifty days. After this, God sent a strong wind, so that the fountains were stopped, and the windows of heaven, where the waters came out, were locked. The ark was many cubits in water till the first of the month Tammuz (the tenth month), then the tops of the mountains were seen on the tenth of Ab (the eleventh month). And Noah opened the window of the ark, and after three weeks he sent forth a dove from the ark to see whether the ground was dry; and again after thirty days Noah removed the covering from the ark.

7 *And he sent forth a raven* to see whether the waters were abated. The raven would not go, but pleaded: "We in the ark are no more than I and my wife; if we are lost, my species will become extinct in the world." But Noah would not re-admit the raven into the ark, and said: "Thou art of no use, neither for food nor for a sacrifice!" But God said unto Noah, "Take it in again, for the raven is intended as an embassy in the days of Elijah the prophet." For Elijah the prophet was hid from Ahab the king of Israel, and as he had nothing to eat, the ravens brought him flesh and bread from the house of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, even to the place where he was hid.

8 *And he sent forth a dove from him.* Our Rabbi B'chai asks: Why is it not said of the raven, "*from him?*" (Reply) This shows us that the clean fowls were with Noah in his own compartment, but the unclean fowls were separate, and therefore it is not said "*from him.*"

11 *And, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off.* The question is: Where did the dove get the leaf, since all the trees in the world were uprooted? The answer is, that in the land of Israel there was no rain and no waters, except that from the other countries reached there; the trees of the land

of Israel therefore were not rooted up. But some of the sages say, the dove brought the leaf from the garden of Eden.

Now another question arises: How did Noah know that the waters abated, when the leaf was from the garden of Eden, for *there was no deluge there?* The Ramban writes: At the time of the Deluge the gate of the garden of Eden was locked, that the waters should not penetrate into it; but when the waters abated the door was opened, and the dove flew in and obtained the leaf.

The dove might have brought a better leaf, but she brought an *olive* leaf, which is bitter, thereby to teach Noah that it is better to eat a bitter leaf from God's hands, than sweet food from the hands of man.

14 *Was the earth dried?* Though the earth was dried, yet Noah and his household did not leave the ark, for, said he, "God commanded me to enter the ark, therefore will I not leave it without His permission."

The Book of Jashar writes: When Noah opened the window of the ark, God ordered him not to leave it till the (end of the) year, and therefore he did not leave it. From this, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah learned, when Nebuchadnezzar ordered them to be cast into the furnace,[1] the pit of the furnace was very deep, but God worked for them a miracle that the pit became level with the ground—that they should not come out without the permission of Nebuchadnezzar.

16 *Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife.* Now has the Holy One, blessed be He! told them again to attach themselves to their wives, therefore it is said in the text, Noah and his wife, and the children with their wives; but on their entering the ark, the text mentions the husbands apart and the wives apart. * * * *

18 *And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him. Vide* next chapter, ver. 5.

21 *For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*

[1] Dan. iii. 20.

God said, I will no more punish man all at one time, because the Yetzer-harrah, *i.e.* the evil imagination (or propensity to evil) is in man from his youth, for as soon as man is born the Yetzer-harrah comes to him, but the Yetzer-tov, *i.e.* good imagination (or propensity to good), first comes to man at the age of thirteen years. Therefore man has great troubles from the Yetzer-harrah, because it is implanted in him from his youth, and the Yetzer-tov is a *guest* with him, and this is why the latter cannot withstand (or oppose) the former.[1]

22 *While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest.* God said, "There must be a time when man must sow and reap upon earth; cold and heat, summer and winter, shall not cease. I will no more slay all at one time as I have done by the Deluge, but some shall be born and some shall die;" therefore, says the text, there will be "seedtime and harvest," that is to say, people will be born and will die again. And of what will they die? The text says "*cold and heat*," for when summer and winter part from each other many diseases follow. This is why we fast on Mondays and Thursdays after the feast of Tabernacles (in the autumn), and after the feast of Passover (in the spring), because the parting of summer and winter brings a change in the atmosphere, and we fast, that the change of atmosphere may do us no harm.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: The text means this: God said, "I will no more bring a deluge, but I will punish the people with sowing and reaping by means of cold and heat; that the heat will burn up the corn, or I will cause a cold that the corn shall not grow."

CHAPTER IX.—5 *And surely your blood of your lives will I require.* God said unto Noah, "Whoever of you shall be slain, I will understand (who did it) and will do vengeance on the murderer." Because God permitted Noah to eat flesh, and to Adam the eating of flesh was prohibited, therefore when Noah hunted beasts for food, lest they kill him, God said, "Whoso kills

[1] See Rom. vii. 21–23.

you on him will I do vengeance, be it one man killing another, or a beast killing a man;" and hence says the text (ver. 2), "*And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth.*"

*And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him.* It may be asked: If God said unto Noah, "Go forth, thou and thy wife," that is to say, that he should join himself with his wife, why did not Noah wish to join himself with his wife? (as is implied from the text), for here Noah and his sons are counted (by themselves), and the women are counted separately. The answer is: On account of three things Noah did not wish to join himself to his wife. 1. He was afraid that a deluge might come upon his children; and he thought to what purpose should he have more children? and therefore God assured him on oath that He would no more bring a deluge. 2. He was afraid that wild beasts would kill his children, because from Adam and onwards man sinned, and consequently the beasts had the power (or authority) to kill him, for the beast says, "I am as good as man when he does not keep the law;" therefore said God unto Noah, "Thou needest not fear the beasts, for '*the fear and dread of you shall be upon every beast*,'" and therefore it is immediately added, "*And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply*," that is to say, be ye not afraid of the beasts, and let your wives bear children. 3. He thought his children would be wicked and kill each other, therefore said God, "'*And surely the blood of your lives will I require*,' if one kills another I will kill the murderer. '*At the hand of every beast will I require it;*' when a beast kills a man, I will kill the beast." It may be asked: Has then a beast sense (of guilt), that it should be executed (for guilt)? The explanation is this: God says, "When a man kills his fellow man, I will require of him his fellow man's blood through a beast; I will send upon him a wild beast which will tear him to pieces."

*At the hand of man, and at the hand of every man's brother.* It may be asked on this text: What need is there to say, "Of man, and of a man's brother?" But the Torah (Scripture) teaches us that a man is killed in four (different) ways: 1. A man may kill himself on account of troubles, respecting whom the text says, "*And your blood of your (own) lives will I require:*" "he who kills himself, him will I punish." 2. A man may incite a fierce dog or a savage beast to kill his fellow man; respecting such the text says, "*At the hand of every beast will I require it:*" "he who kills his fellow man through a beast, him will I punish." 3. A man may send his servant (or slave) to kill a fellow man; respecting such the text says, "*At the hand of man, and at the hand of every man's brother;*" which means "he who kills his fellow man through a messenger, him will I punish." And 4. one may personally kill his fellow man; respecting such the text says, "*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.*"

7 *And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply.* The sages say: Close on "Whoso sheddeth man's blood," the Torah (Scripture) writes: "Be ye fruitful and multiply." This is to show us that he who does not take a wife to beget children is as much as if he sheddeth blood. But some sages say: He who does not take a wife to beget children causeth the Shechinah to depart from Israel, as it is said in the text, "To be a God unto thee, *and to thy seed* after thee,"[1] which means, the Shechinah is with thee when thou hast children.[2]

13 *I do set my bow in the cloud.* God said unto Noah, "I give thee a token that I will keep my oath, and will never again bring a deluge. When the people become wicked, I will send rain and set a rainbow in the heavens, to show them they deserve that I should have war with them, and cause much rain to drown them; but I will keep my oath." And to show that God is at peace with us and will not destroy, the bow stands with the ends downwards to the people. But when there are

[1] Gen. xvii. 7. [2] Vide *Tal. Misc.*, p. 277, 18.

very righteous men in a generation there is no rainbow (required), because the righteous (themselves) protect that generation. Therefore there was no rainbow in the days of King Hezekiah, nor in the days of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, nor in the days of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi.

20 *And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard.* For Noah took with him into the ark, grapes to plant a vineyard. The Torah mentions the planting of the vine so close to the (record of the) rainbow, to show, as the rainbow indicates that people are wicked, so likewise he who desires to drink wine should know that much wickedness may result from much drink; he may even lose his life. King Solomon has said, "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? he who drinks much wine."[1] And not wine only, but also other intoxicating drinks are very unwholesome; and therefore in olden times they used to mix water with the wine in the cup of blessing at the repetition of grace after meals, because their wine was very strong, and thus they demonstrated that the wine was not fit to have a blessing repeated over it, because evil comes of it. And this is why the text says, "And Noah *began*,"[2] signifying that he began to be *profane*, he drank much wine.

Though Noah was a just man, so that he saved the whole world by his piety, for the world springs from him; yet because he drank much wine, he became uncovered, and his children sinned, and he cursed them in consequence. And hence the Torah has written thirteen Vaus[3] in connection with wine, to show that though a man be worthy on account of his

[1] Prov. xxiii. 29.

[2] ויחל from the verb חלל has both meanings: *to begin*, *to profane*, or *to defile*. It is quite usual to play on a word of two meanings, if it serves the commentator's purpose.

[3] The letter Vau is used as a conjunctive, which corresponds to the English *and*. *And* is found thirteen times between the 20th and 24th verses, and as the letter Vau (*and*) means, in Syriac, *woe*, the expounders of the Talmud have taken the thirteen *Vaus* as so many woes pronounced against wine. Vide *Sanhedrin*, fol. 70A.

piety to enter paradise, which is divided into thirteen divisions, through which flow thirteen rivers of precious oil, and in which there are thirteen raised daïs (one above the other, to indicate high and low degrees or ranks) on which the righteous are seated; yet when a man drinks much wine he is excluded from the thirteen degrees.

The Midrash Rabbah writes: At the time when Noah was about to plant the vineyard, a spirit met him, and proposed partnership in planting the same.[1] "But yet" (said the spirit), "beware that thou dost not drink much, else I will injure thee." Therefore, when a man is intoxicated, the evil spirit causes him to be stark mad and to do evil.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says: In the day Noah planted the vineyard, on that very day he drank of the wine, and on the selfsame day also he did much evil on account of the wine; he became profane or unholy.

21 *And was uncovered within his tent*, on account of the wine (he drank). And therefore it is said: "And he was *uncovered*," for it signifies *exile*.[2] This is to show that on account

[1] The story of the partnership between the evil spirit and Noah is recorded in the Midrash Tanchuma with considerable variation, and will bear repeating here. In fol. 14B we read: Whilst Noah was preparing the ground for his vineyard, Satan approached him, and inquired about the object of his occupation. "I am planting a vineyard," was the reply. "And of what use will that be?" asked the evil one. "Its fruit," answered Noah, "fresh or dried, will be sweet; and its juice will 'make glad the heart of man'" (Ps. civ. 15). Satan then offered to enter into partnership with him; and on the settlement of the agreement, he manured the soil with the blood of a lamb, a lion, a pig, and a monkey. Asked to explain his motive for this singular mode of cultivating the vine, he replied: "Before a man drinks of its juice he is as harmless as a lamb, and 'as a sheep before her shearers is dumb.' When he has taken a moderate quantity of the liquid, his animal spirits are roused like those of a lion; but when he has indulged in it immoderately, he wallows in the mire like a pig, or performs all sorts of antics like a monkey." *Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, p. 229.

[2] גלה has both meanings: *to uncover, to reveal, to make bare;* or, *to lead away captive, to carry into exile,*—another example of a play on a word with two meanings.

of drinking much wine his children, the Ten Tribes, were exiled from the Land of Israel, because they drank much wine, and consequently have done much evil, as it is stated in the Scriptures: "That drink wine in bowls," etc.[1] And the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were also exiled on account of wine, as it is recorded in Scripture: "They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are put out of the way."[2]

22 *And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father.* Canaan, the son of Ham, seeing Noah lying uncovered, went to his father Ham, and told him of it. Ham went and saw the nakedness of his father, and he told it to his brothers Shem and Japheth. But Shem immediately took a garment and covered the shame of his father, and Japheth helped him to do so. Therefore was Shem counted worthy that his children should receive the commandment respecting Fringes to their garments.[3] And because Japheth also helped to cover his father, therefore will his children be covered in burial in the days of Gog and Magog. For Gog and Magog will descend from Japheth, and will war against Israel in the days of the Messiah, and as they will be killed by the Messiah, God will then pay the reward (for Japheth's conduct) that they shall be buried (and thus *covered*). From this we learn that when two together do a good work, and one of them is more prompt in the performance of the meritorious act than the other, he receives a better reward than the other; as we find it in the case of Shem, because he was prompt to cover his father's shame, and Japheth came afterwards to do the same, therefore has Shem received a better reward than Japheth.

Because Ham put his father to shame, and did not cover his nakedness, therefore were his children put to shame, and fell into the hands of the king of Assyria, and he led them (captive) naked and uncovered.

24 *And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his*

[1] Amos vi. 6. [2] Isa. xxviii. 7. [3] Num. xv. 38.

*younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan.* He cursed Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, that he should always be a servant to his brethren. Because, when they came out of the ark, God blessed them, and Ham was included in the blessing, therefore Noah did not curse him, but his son Canaan. Rava, on behalf of Rav Joseph, says: Noah said to Ham, "Thy children shall be dark and black." These are the Ethiopians and the Negroes, which have descended from Ham, on account of the curse.

28, 29 *And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years.*

CHAPTER X.—1 *Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah.* In this section are mentioned seventy of the sons of Noah, from whom originated seventy languages (nations), and the text mentions them so that it should be known from whom Abraham descended, and it tells that he descended from Shem.

The Ramban writes: The Torah has shown that Abraham was also one who bore testimony that God alone created the world, for Abraham was fifty-eight years old when Noah died. Thus Abraham conversed with Noah, who told him on behalf of his father Lamech, who saw Adam, whom God created at the beginning of the world; and Abraham communicated this to his children, Isaac and Jacob; and Isaac and Jacob saw Shem the son of Noah, who had been in the ark, and who related to them the story of the Deluge and of the ark. Jacob, again, repeated the story to his children."[1] Therefore the text mentions the names of Shem and his children.

8, 9 *He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter.* Nimrod counselled rebellion against God in the generation of Confusion of Tongues. He drew people after him by his (cunning) speech, and incited them to rebel against God.

[1] Vide *Tal. Misc.*, p. 111, 22.

In Pirké de Rabbi Eliezer it is said on behalf of Rabbi Yehudah, that the coat, which God made for Adam, Noah took with him into the ark, and afterwards he gave it to Nimrod. When Nimrod dressed himself in the coat, all the cattle and the beasts and the fowls bowed before him, for on the coat was pictured all the cattle and the beasts and the fowls. Therefore the people thought Nimrod was a mighty one, and made him to be king over them. He then said (as in next chapter):

CHAPTER XI.—4 *Go to, let us build a city and a tower whose top shall reach heaven.* And they built the same tower twenty-seven miles high. Steps were on the east side (of the tower) and on the west side; those who carried up bricks went up on the east side and came down by the west, in order that one should not obstruct the passage of the other. If one fell down and was killed, no one felt concerned about it, for there were many thousands to carry bricks; but when a brick happened to fall, they were much distressed, and wept, saying, "When can another brick come in its place!"

The generation of the Confusion of Tongues said: "Why should God be a king in heaven and we on earth? We will go up and war with Him, and we will reign above." They then placed an idol on the top of the tower, with a sword in its hand, so that the world thought the idol was at war with God. And this is why the people of the Deluge perished, but the people of the Confusion of Tongues, who built the tower in rebellion against God, did not perish; because the former committed theft and robbery, but the latter greatly loved each other and had *peace* among themselves. Rabbi says: "How great is *peace!* so that when Israel even serves idols but have *peace* among themselves,[1] God says, 'I can do nothing unto them!'".

The generation of the Confusion of Tongues said: "After 1656 years the heavens will be in a weak condition, therefore

[1] And yet it is quite proverbial among the Jews themselves: שני עברים נצים, "Two Hebrews quarrel together." Exod. ii. 13.

we must build four lofty pillars of brick, on each side (on each point of the compass) one pillar, that heaven should rest on the same to prevent its falling down." And they said, "We will make a great tower whose top shall reach heaven, and we will hew out great windows in heaven that the waters shall flow out, in order that God shall no more be able to bring a deluge."

Rabbi Jeremiah says: There were three parties; one said: "Let us mount up into heaven and dwell there;" this has God scattered all over the world. The second said: "Let us serve idols there;" this had their language confounded. The third said: "We will wage war with God in heaven;" this God has cursed. Rabbi Yochanan said: A third part of the tower was consumed by fire, and a third sank into the ground, and a third remained.[1]

7 *And there confounded their language.* Because they sinned with their language when they said, "Let us build a tower," therefore God punished them by confounding their language. The sacred tongue (*Hebrew*) was spoken by all *till* the generation of the Confusion of Tongues, for the world was created with the sacred tongue; but now each of the seventy angels took one nation and instructed it in a (new) language; but God instructed Israel in the holy tongue.

And when God had confounded their languages, one ordered another to bring him an axe, and he brought him some other thing, for he did not understand what was wanted, and thus they could not get on building the tower.

6 *Nothing will be restrained from them.* This signifies, that nothing was wanting to them, for they had great fortune to build; therefore God scattered them, as the text says, "*So the Lord scattered them.*" The Rabbis say: God caused the sea to

[1] The Talmud adds: אויר מגדל משכח, "The air about the tower causes oblivion." *Sanhedrin*, fol. 109A. By way of contrast we quote another passage from the Talmud, which is a favourite with the Jew: אוירא דא"י מחכים, *i.e.* "The air of the Land of Israel makes one wise." *Bava bathra*, fol. 158B.

pour itself out upon them and drowned them, and God left but thirty families alive.

10 *These are the generations of Shem.* Why is it mentioned of these people, how long they lived, and begat sons and daughters,—and why is it not mentioned, as was the case from Adam until Noah, that they died?[1] The answer is: Because from Shem descended the House of David, and the Messiah who lives for ever, as it is stated in Scripture, "He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it to him, even length of days for and ever."[2]

Another reason why death is not mentioned of Noah and his children is: Because from them the world was established, but the generations from Adam to Noah all perished in the Deluge.

Another reason is: Because the generations from Adam to Noah lived very long, therefore it is written "*And he died,*" that is to say, they lived long enough. But the generations from Noah and onwards did not live long, therefore it is not written of them, that they died.

28 *And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.* The text informs us that Abraham sacrificed himself for the sake of God, and he was therefore counted worthy that God should speak to him. And how could God speak with Abraham without proclaiming what a just man he was? Therefore does the text make it known that Abraham allowed himself to be cast into the fire for God's sake. For his father Terah was a dealer in idols, and appointed Abraham to sell them. When anyone came to buy an idol, Abraham asked him, "How old art thou?" The other replied, "Fifty or sixty years." Then Abraham exclaimed, "Woe be to thee! thou art sixty years old, and wilt thou bow down to one that is only one day old? for the idol was only made this day." Thus the other departed with shame. Once a woman came and brought a basin of fine flour, as an offering

[1] *Vide* chap. v. p. 38. [2] Ps. xxi. 4.

to the idols. Abraham took it and placed it before them, and took a great stick and broke all the idols, except the largest, in whose hands he fixed the stick. When Terah came and asked Abraham, "Who has done all this?" he replied: "A woman brought fine flour as an offering, and there began a quarrel between the gods as to who should eat first, but the greatest one took the stick and broke them all!" Terah then said to Abraham: "Have they then reason or life in them?" Abraham replied, "Since they have no reason, why should we worship them?" Terah then seized him and delivered him into the hands of Nimrod, who said unto Abraham, "If thou wilt bow down to the idols, well and good; if not, I will order thee to be cast into the fire." Haran stood near (at the time) and thought: "I shall see; if Abraham be delivered from the fire, I shall declare that I serve the God of Abraham; if not, I will serve what Nimrod serves." When Abraham came out of the fire uninjured, Haran was asked: "Whom dost thou worship?" and he replied: "*The God of Abraham!*" And they cast him into the fire, where his bowels shrank together, and he died. Then came an angel and thrust him out of the fire before his father Terah, and this is the meaning of the text: "*And Haran* died before his father Terah"; that is on account, or because, of his father Terah; for if Terah had not complained to Nimrod against Abraham, Haran would not have been cast into the fire. From this we learn, that a man should not trust to a miracle, but if he be willing to die for God's sake let him not think that God will work a miracle for his sake, for he who trusts to a miracle does not willingly give himself to God; and therefore God performs no miracle for him, as we find by Haran, because he allowed himself to be cast into the fire *after he had seen* that a miracle was wrought for Abraham; therefore God performed no miracle for him. It is on that account that the sages have said: "One should not trust to a miracle." [1]

[1] אין סומכין על הנס. This saying is now quite proverbial.

30 *But Sarah was barren, she had no child.* The question is: Since Sarah was barren, it is therefore well known of itself that she had no child, why need it yet be stated: "*She had no child*"? The answer is this: There are many women who (from some constitutional cause) can have no children, but yet after many years they bear children, therefore the text states, that Sarah, even after many years, was still incapable of bearing children.

Abraham and Sarah, therefore, resolved to leave their native land and go to the land of Canaan, which is a holy land, where perhaps they might be counted worthy to have children.

It is known that Abraham was the principal and even the master of his father's household, and when he left for the land of Canaan they all accompanied him. But Abraham honoured his father, whom he made master over himself, and therefore it is stated—

31 *And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot,* etc.

32 *And Terah died in Haran.* Here is a question: Why till now has the Torah not mentioned death of the children of Shem, but of Terah death is mentioned? The sages reply thus: The Torah was obliged to record that he died, in order that people should not say: Abraham went away from his country—from the native land of his parents, whom he *forsook*, as it is said further on: "Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred"—How can it be possible that Abraham did not honour his father, but (in his old age) *forsook* him? Therefore does the text first record: "And Terah *died*," and immediately after it states: "Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred."

And even when God said to Abraham: "Thou shalt (after death) go to thy fathers in peace,"[1] our sages inferred from it that Terah has a portion in the World to Come; for Terah participated in the merits of his son Abraham, and entered Paradise. Here the fruit saved the tree; that is to say, Abra-

[1] Chap. xv. 13.

ham was the fruit, and Terah the tree. The Midrash learns from this, that all kinds of wood were eligible for fire on the altar, except the wood of the olive-tree and of the vine; these were not allowed to be brought for fire on the altar, because they used oil in the Temple and also wine for the (service of the) altar. Thus these two fruits saved their (respective) trees from the fire, just as Abraham, the fruit of Terah, saved Terah from the fire of hell. The sages explicitly say: The merits of the son are available for the father, but not those of the father for the son.[1] This means: A son delivers his father from hell,

[1] זכי אבא, אבא לא מזכי ברא. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 104A. The Talmud says: The merits of a father are not available for a son, for Abraham could not deliver Ishmael, nor could Isaac deliver Esau; but why a son s merits are available for a father, the Talmud does not explain. This fact alone is a strong proof that the Rabbinical Mass, called *Kadish*, is of modern date, and was unknown to primitive Judaism. Vide *Tal. Misc.*, p. 332, 10, also 305, 64, and 311, 83. But we add here, as briefly as possible, a few particulars respecting the Jewish Mass, or Prayer for the Dead, called Kadish. It is repeated in the *Chaldee language*, that the angels, who do not understand Chaldee, might not thereby be provoked to jealousy against man, for being so highly privileged in possessing such a valuable prayer, which even the angels do not possess. Kadish is offered for the souls of men and women, but is repeated by men only, and not by women. Hence orthodox Jews are more anxious to have male rather than female children. Sons, and not daughters, by repeating Kadish at public worship for a certain period, can deliver their parents from hell. Parents cannot say Kadish on behalf of their children.

At the end of time, when God will proclaim and explain the New Law, which He will give by the Messiah to mankind, Zerubbabel the son of Shealthiel, whose voice will be heard from one end of the world to the other, will say Kadish for all souls, and the wicked Jews as well as the *pious* Gentiles, who will yet be in hell, if they but respond AMEN, will then be delivered from the eternal punishment in hell. *Kab Hajasher*, chap. iv.

There is a good deal more to be said on the subject of Kadish, but at present we will only quote from the Jewish Liturgy the following form of Prayer, the repetition of which is believed to be an effectual means of delivering condemned souls from the punishment of hell.

יתגדל May his great name be exalted, and sanctified throughout the world, which He hath created, according to His will. May He establish His

but a father does not deliver his son from hell, as Scripture says: "Neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deut. xxxiii. 39), that is to say, Abraham did not deliver his wicked son Ishmael.

Kingdom in our life-time, and in the life-time of the whole house of Israel; soon, and in a short time, and say ye, Amen.

Amen. May His great name be blessed, and glorified for ever and ever.

May His hallowed name be praised, glorified, exalted, magnified, honoured, and most excellently adored; blessed is He; far exceeding all blessings, hymns, praises and beatitudes, that are repeated throughout the world, and say ye, Amen.

Unto Israel, their Rabbis, their disciples, and all their disciples' disciples, who diligently study the law, who are in this, and every other place, may there be unto them, and to you, abundant peace, grace, favour, mercy, long life, enlarged maintenance, and redemption, from the presence of their Father of heaven and earth, and say ye, Amen.

May the fulness of peace from heaven, and good life be granted to us and to all Israel, and say ye, Amen.

May He who maketh peace in His high heavens, bestow peace on us and on all Israel, and say ye, Amen.

*Remark.* We do not see any connection between the above form of prayer and the deliverance from purgatory, but this we know for certain, that no dutiful son, be his orthodoxy ever so weak, would ever willingly miss repeating it for the benefit of his departed parents.

One point more must be noticed here. On all Jewish festivals, especially on the Day of Atonements (Atonements in the plural יום הכפורים)* there is a *High Mass* for the dead called סדר הזכרת נשמות "*The form of the Remembrance of the Souls*" (in purgatory), solemnly repeated, not by orphan sons, but by an official of the Synagogue, and for each departed person he mentions by name he is paid by a relative of the dead. The money thus obtained goes to the funds of the Synagogue. Though the High Mass is only about four lines in extent, it has generally to be repeated with *tremendous rapidity*, especially when the congregation is numerous, for each individual expects, for his money, *the whole form of the prayer* for the soul of his departed relative to be repeated separately, and this lengthens the already long festival service; and the congregation has to *fast* till all is over.

* Because on that day atonement is made for the living and the dead.

END OF SECOND SECTION.

CHAPTER XII.—1 *Get thee out.* King Solomon, peace be upon him! says in Proverbs:—"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."[1] The text teaches us that a man should associate with wise and pious people, and should separate himself from sinners. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be broken." As he who associates with the sages is led in consequence to worship God properly, and to think of God continually, so likewise he who associates with the wicked forgets God continually and learns from the wicked their wicked works. Therefore, let a man be warned not to associate with wicked people. It is said: "When woe overtakes the wicked, his neighbour is implicated in it."[2] Abraham also wished to keep the Law and to serve God properly, as the Gemara says: Abraham, from his own reason, observed the whole Law and the Gemara (the written and oral Laws) *before* they were given. Therefore God said unto Abraham: "*Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred,*" because they are wicked people.

The sages say: Abraham was like a vessel containing spices, in an impure place, so that no one knew of the good scent; but when the vessel was removed from the foul place, people became aware of the good odour. So likewise was Abraham amongst the wicked who served idols, and therefore God told him to get out of his country, that his good works might become known. And this was one of the *Ten Trials* with which God tested Abraham to ascertain whether he would observe His command;—to abandon his home where he had lived all his days, and where he was well known, to go to a strange country as a penitent. This was the *first* Trial, and "the offering of Isaac" was the *tenth.* These two Trials resemble one another.[3] Here it is said: "GET THEE out from

[1] Prov. xiii. 20.

[2] *Negaim*, chap. xii. 6, אוי לרשע אוי לשכנו

[3] According to the thirteen Rabbinical Rules by which Scripture is to be

thy country," and by "the offering of Isaac" it is also said: "GET THEE into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering."[1] This teaches us, that a man would rather die than be driven from his birth-place and see no more of his family.

2 *And I will make thee a great nation.* Our sages say: Travel weakens a man in three particulars: 1. It weakens his power of procreation; 2. it diminishes his money, on account of travelling expenses; and 3. it lowers his good name, for he is not known in a strange country. Therefore God said to Abraham, on these three particulars he should suffer no loss on his journey; and this is signified in the text: "*I will make of thee a great nation*," "for in *this* land thou art not worthy to beget children, but *there* thou shalt have children." "*And I will make great thy name*," "and I will bless thee," with much money; "and thou shalt be a blessing," thou shalt be *a Blesser.* God said unto Abraham, "Till now the blessings were in My own hands, I blessed Adam and Noah; but now I deliver them into thy hands that thou shouldest bless whomsoever thou wilt."

3 *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse* HIM (sing.) *that curseth thee* (sing.). That is to say, I will *first* bless him that will bless thee, that his blessing should take effect on thee; and I will first curse him who curseth thee, in order that his curse should have no effect on thee.

The Midrash Tanchuna writes: The text says: Lech-

expounded, which rules are embodied in the Jewish Liturgy and repeated by every pious Jew in his daily morning prayer, one rule, the second on the list, runs as follows: טבנין אב מכתוב אחד, *i.e.* "A decision deduced from an agreement, or equality of texts." "*Get thee*" in one text certainly is equal to "*Get thee*" in another, yet the agreement of the two texts from which the "*Get thee*" "*Get thee*" are quoted, is entirely wanting. By a rule like this the sages of the Talmud might prove that the swan descended from the goose, and the goose from the duck, and man from the monkey, because there is some point of resemblance between them.

[1] Chap. xxii. 2.

lecha,[1] *i.e.* "*Get thee gone.*" By this God indicated unto Abraham that he would have children at the age of a hundred years, for the numerical value of *Lech-lecha, i.e.* "Get thee gone," is one hundred.[2]

The Gemara says, in the first Section of the Treatise Rosh Hashanah[3]: Rabbi Yitzkhac said: Five things annul the judicial sentence passed against a man. 1. Almsgiving, as it is said, "Alms delivereth from death."[4] 2. Prayer, as it is written: "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distress."[5] 3. Change of Name, as in the case of Sarah it is written: "Thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but *Sarah*"; by another name she will have children. 4. Change of conduct; when one changes his deeds from bad to good, he annuls the sentence passed against him. And, 5. some sages say, Change of Place; when one goes away from the town where he had no *Luck*, and goes into another town, he can change his *Luck* for the better.

In Berachoth, Chapter Haroéh,[6] Rabbi Yehudah says: Three things shorten the life of a man. 1. When he is called up to the scroll of the Law and he fails to come, since it is written: "For it (the scroll of the Law) is thy life and the strength of thy days."[7] 2. When a cup (of wine at the con-

[1] לְךָ־לְךָ literally "go-to thee"; which we render, *get thee gone.*

[2] ל=30. ך=20. ל=30. ך=20. Total, 100. See List of Numerical Values of the Hebrew Letters, at end of Preface.

[3] Fol. 16B, where the statement is rather different to that given here. *Vide Gen. acc. to the Talmud*, p. 252, ver. 1.

[4] Prov. x. 2. צְדָקָה, *i.e.* righteousness, is also usually rendered alms, almsgiving, and charity. [5] Ps. cvii. 6. [6] Fol. 55 A.

[7] Deut. xxx. 20. A portion of the Law of Moses is read at public worship three times a week—Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; also on feast and fast days, and on New Moon days, on whatever day of the week they may fall. These portions of the Law are divided into three, five, or seven sections, to each of which a different Jew is formally called up, and he has to repeat certain blessings before and after the Synagogue Reader reads the section. To fail to appear at the desk where the Law is read, the text tells us, shortens life.

clusion of a meal of which three or more adult male persons partook) is given him to repeat the usual blessing over it, and he fails to repeat it, as it is said: "And I will bless them that bless thee." And, 3. When he exalts himself, as we find it in the case of Joseph the Righteous, because he somewhat exalted himself, he died before any of his brethren.[1]

4 *So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him.* Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran, and God said unto him: "Thou art 75 years old, and must drag about the country as a penitent; for the sake of this (thy trying condition) shall a Redeemer of Israel come out of thee, that is, Queen Esther."

5 *And the souls that they had gotten in Haran.* Abraham had gathered much substance and servants in Haran, all of which he took with him. He ought first to have chosen a country and then taken all with him, but Abraham relied on God that He would give him a good land, and therefore he took all with him immediately.

*That they had gotten in Haran* has also this important meaning: Abraham proselytised men, and Sarah proselytised women, and Scripture counts it to them as if they had created them. These they took with them. Isaac did the same, as it is written: "And Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger."[2] Jacob also did the same, as it is said: "Then Jacob said unto his household, to *all that were with him* (be ye proselytes and) put away the strange gods."[3]

In the Treatise Sanhedrin,[4] Rish Lakish says: Whosoever teaches his neighbour's son the Law is as if he had created him, as it is said: "And the souls that they had gotten (or *made*) in Haran." Rabbi Abuhu says: Whoever induces his

[1] Vide *Talm. Misc.*, p. 41, 8.

[2] Chap. xxxvii. 1. By a play on the word מגורי, it is made out that Isaac made proselytes.

[3] Chap. xxxv. 2.

[4] Fol. 99B.

fellow to perform a meritorious work, is as if he had created him.[1]

6 *And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh.* Abraham prayed in Sichem that his children should not lose the war in Sichem. And Abraham came to the plain of Moreh, where Israel sware unto God that they would observe the Law and the Commandments.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Abraham went from town to town and declared unto the people that God is in heaven, and that he created heaven and earth, and this is why God's first promise to Abraham was: "I will bless thee, and make thy name great," which means—"I will bless thee" with much money that thou shalt be rich; "and will make thy name great"; for a man who is not rich and has no name, people will not listen to him, nor worship God (at his recommendation). This is a solution of a difficult question. God said unto Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country and I will make thee rich, and will make thy name great"; the question is: Did Abraham serve God on account of the (promised) reward? Is that possible? But the explanation is this: Abraham did not serve God on account of any reward, but God said unto Abraham: "*Because* thou wilt tell the people to worship Me, and if thou be poor they will not listen to thy words, particularly as thou art from a strange land and they know thee not; therefore must I bless thee with money and with a good name, in order that thou shalt be able to speak freely with kings and princes, for when a man is rich he speaks freely to all."

Another question is asked: Why does the text say: "I will bless *them* that bless thee, and curse *him* that curseth

[1] The version of the last sentence as given here by the Commentator is not in harmony with the version of the Talmud which he *professes* to quote; in the original it runs thus: Whoever induces his fellow to perform a meritorious work, is considered in Scripture as if he had done it himself.

thee"? Why in the *plural* the blessing, and in the singular by the curse? The reply to the question is this: Many people blessed Abraham, because (by proselytising them), he brought them to the World to Come, hence the plural is used of them that blessed; but *only Nimrod* cursed Abraham, because he proved that Nimrod was no god; therefore said God: "And curse *him* that curseth thee."

And because it was the intention of Abraham to proselytise kings and princes (but feared them lest they kill him, as it happened by Nimrod, who ordered him to be cast into the furnace), the text says: "*And the Canaanite was then in the land*," that is to say, a very powerful king was in the land, and Abraham was afraid to proclaim the name of God to him.

7 *And there builded he an altar unto the Lord.* Here it does not say: "And called upon the name of the Lord," because he feared to proclaim God's name. But when

8 *He removed from thence unto a mountain*, where the king was not, then it is stated: "*And called upon the name of the Lord.*" Later on it is again said: "*And the Canaanite dwelled then in the land*";[1] but that teaches us that Abraham said unto Lot: "Thy herdmen quarrel with mine, because we have much cattle; and the king, being powerful, will drive us out of the country, therefore let us not quarrel." Hence it is said twice: "*And the Canaanite was then in the land;*" 1. that Abraham was afraid, because of the king, to proclaim God's name; and 2. it shows us that Abraham was afraid to quarrel with Lot, lest the king drive him out of the land.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks yet another question: Why did Abraham depart from the land of Canaan—*the Holy Land*—on account of famine, since God told him to go to Canaan? The answer is: Abraham was afraid that the Canaanites would say, Because he came into our land and proselytised the idolaters, therefore came the famine on the land. This is why Abraham left on account of the famine, especially as that was

[1] Chap. xiii. 7.

the very first famine in the world,—the idolaters would have ascribed it to the faith or religion of Abraham.

11 *Behold, now I know, that thou art a fair woman to look upon.* Usually a man becomes ugly on a journey, but thou art still in thy beauty.

Another explanation is this: Abraham and Sarah were exceedingly modest, so that he never once looked on her person,[1] but now they crossed over water (in which he saw her reflection), and Abraham said unto her: "*Now* I know how beautiful thou art. We are coming to Egypt, where the people are swarthy; and as they are not accustomed to see a handsome woman, they will take thee away and kill me. Therefore in all places we come to, say that thou art my sister, in order that when they take thee away, they may at least let me live."

Our Rabbi B'chai, on behalf of Ramban, writes: Abraham sinned in that he caused Sarah to sin; for because he was afraid that they would kill him, he let Sarah to be taken *for a wife* whilst she was the wife of a husband. He ought to have relied on God, who can deliver every one. And he committed yet another sin, in that he departed from the land of Canaan (the *Holy Land*) on account of famine; and this is the reason why Israel have been in captivity of Egypt, in the very land where Abraham sinned. But our sages say: That the captivity of Egypt was not on account of *that* sin, but because Abraham said unto God: "*Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?*"[2] "Whereby shall I know that my children will inherit the land of Canaan?" And because the captivity of Egypt was occasioned by evil words (implying *doubt*) against God, therefore it lasted *four hundred and thirty years*;[3] but this (present)

[1] The Chassidim of Russia and Austria are credited with never looking on a woman, not even on their own wives, excepting on Sabbath eve, מחמת עונג שבת, *i.e.* on account of the pleasures of the Sabbath. This pleasure is in connection with the duty based on Exod. xxxi. 16, as explained in *Tal. Misc.*, p. 339.

[2] Chap. xv. 8.

[3] Exod. xii. 40, 41.

captivity resulted from three things: Evil thought, evil works, and jealousy, and therefore it lasts three times as long as the captivity of Egypt, and still longer.

The Ramban writes: Abraham said to Sarah, that she should say that he was her brother, but Sarah did not wish to deny her husband. But on their arrival in Egypt, her beauty was praised, and it was said that she was fit (to be a wife) for the king, and when asked whether she had a husband, Sarah was (simply) *silent*, and did not say that she was Abraham's wife. But *Abraham said* she was his sister, and the king therefore treated him well for Sarah's sake. Therefore did Pharaoh say unto Abraham: "What is this that *thou* hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy *wife?*" But (in the text) nothing is mentioned that Pharaoh had said anything to Sarah, why *she* did not tell him that she was Abraham's wife. Sarah was *silent.* She did not *deny* her husband, for so it behoves every pious woman.

It might be asked also: Why was Abraham afraid that they would kill him, since it was as much forbidden to idolaters to take away another man's wife as to shed blood? For we find that Pharaoh said unto Abraham: "Why didst thou not tell me that she was *thy wife*" for then we would not have touched her? Now, why was Abraham afraid? The reply is: Abraham reasoned with himself thus: The Egyptians are prompt to fornication, they will therefore certainly slay me in order that Sarah *should not* be a married woman.

It may also be asked: It is not right to cause another man to sin, therefore how could Abraham say she was his sister, whereby he caused other people to sin? The reply is this: Abraham gave Sarah a temporary divorce,[1] thinking, that

[1] In *Shabbath*, fol. 56A, we are informed that before Urijah went to war he gave a temporary divorce to his wife Bath-sheba, and though King David took her to his house, "*and he lay with her*," the Talmud says: כל האומר דוד חטא אינו אלא טועה, *i.e.* Whoever says that David had sinned is certainly in error. A temporary divorce then is a very convenient

should they take her, she would then be the wife of no other man.

14 *And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt.* In the text it is said: That Abraham *alone* came into Egypt. The question arises: And where was Sarah? The reply is: Abraham hid Sarah in a chest, but when they came (to the Custom House) they ordered Abraham to open the chest to see what kind of merchandise it contained. And when Abraham was obliged to open the chest, a light proceeded from Sarah's beauty which illumined the whole town.[1]

15 *And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.* The Pirké d' Rabbi Eliezer writes: Abraham was tried with *Ten Trials.*

The *first* trial was: When he was born the princes sought to slay him, because they knew that he would introduce a new religion into the world. Thus he was secreted in a cave for thirteen years, and saw neither sun nor moon. When he came out of the cave he employed the Holy Tongue (Hebrew), and spoke evil of all idols.

The *second* trial was: He was captive for ten years, seven in Kitah,[2] and three in Kordu.[3] And afterwards he was cast into the furnace out of which God delivered him.

The *third* trial was: When he had to go away from his country and family into a strange land as a penitent.

The *fourth* trial was: When there was a famine and he was obliged to go into Egypt.

The *fifth* trial was: That they took away his wife. This was on the feast of Passover, and God brought a plague on Pharaoh and on his household, a typical earnest that God

instrument to make sin *not sinful!* Sarah and Bath-sheba were *divorced* women, and therefore they were lawful for Pharaoh and David! Such is the doctrine of *Rabbinism!!!*

[1] In the Midrash this legend is more fully given. Vide *Tal. Misc.*, p. 58 (*al.*).

[2] Cuthah, 2 Kings xvii. 24, 30.

[3] Kardou. *Bava-Bath.*, fol. 91A, probably Kurdistan.

20 *And they sent him away and all that he had.* The text teaches us that Pharaoh did not take back the presents he gave Abraham for the sake of Sarah, though he ought to have done so, because Abraham *deceived* him, in saying that she was his sister. But God performed a miracle, so that he did not take them back. Pharaoh moreover accompanied Abraham four paces, for the sake of which he became worthy that Israel should be with him in the Captivity of Egypt four hundred years.[1]

CHAPTER XIII.—3 *And he went on his journeys.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Abraham was a righteous man. He was not quite pleased with the presents, for had it happened to any other man who got valuable presents by *deception*, he would have hastily gone away and would have kept himself at a distance from Pharaoh, who might have repented and taken back his presents. But Abraham did not do so; "*he went on his journeys*," he travelled as on his former journeys, *not hastily*. He always remained overnight where he formerly stayed overnight when he travelled from Canaan to Egypt.

Our sages say: Abraham borrowed money in all the inns wherever he went from Canaan to Egypt, for he feared to show money at the inns on account of robbers; and the reason that Abraham again lodged in the same inns, was, in order to pay his debts. Our sages deduce also from this: That a man should always put up in the same inn where he once before lodged, that he may not put the first innkeeper to shame.[2]

[1] Rabbi Meir used to say: Compel people to accompany guests some way on their journey, as the reward for such an hospitable act has no limit. Not to accompany a guest is as great a crime as the shedding of blood. If the people of Jericho had accompanied the prophet Elisha, he would not have instigated the bears against the little children (2 Kings ii. 23). *Soteh*, fol. 46B.

[2] There are some very curious laws in the Talmud respecting inns. A short extract must suffice. In *Eirechin*, fol 16B, we read: How long shall a man refrain from changing his inn? Rav says: Until he is driven from

6 *And the land was not able to bear them.* Abraham and Lot having much cattle but not sufficient pasture for them, there arose much quarrelling between their respective herdsmen.

7 *And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.* The Ramban writes: All the seven idolatrous nations had a share in the land of Canaan, but as there was not sufficient pasture for all their cattle, they dwelt there by turns every year, and at that time "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled in the land." This explains why the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot quarrelled together, saying, "If when the Canaanite and the Perizzite only are in the land there is scarcity of pasture, how can we strangers find it for our cattle?"

Another explanation is, that the quarrel originated thus: Lot's herdsmen were wicked, and pastured their cattle in fields that belonged to others, and Abraham's herdsmen rebuked them for robbing other people. Lot's herdsmen retorted thus: God gave the land to Abraham as an inheritance, and as Abraham has no son and Lot is his nearest heir, it is therefore no robbery (to feed Lot's cattle on other people's land).[1] Therefore does the text state: "*And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land,*" that is to say, the time was not yet come to inherit the land. Hence said Abraham unto Lot: "Why should we have strife in a strange land (a land not yet ours), let us separate." Then went Lot and chose for himself the locality near Jordan, because there was good pasture for his cattle there.

it by blows. Shemuel says: Until his luggage is thrown out, etc., etc. But how is it *proved from the Law*, that a man may not change his inn? Reply—It is written: "Unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning." Gen. xiii. 3.

[1] From a Rabbinical point of view the argument of Lot's herdsmen was perfectly correct. Abraham, however, seems to have been ignorant of the fact that "The world was created only for Israel," and the property of the Gentiles was made *free* for the service of Israel, otherwise he would have considered the land to be his property even then. Vide *Tal. Misc.*, p. 38 (*n.*), and 116, 38.

11 *And Lot journeyed east.* Lot journeyed *from the east,*[1] or he departed from the Kadmon [2] *of the world!* that is to say, Lot said: "I will have neither Abraham nor the God of Abraham; and he joined himself to Sodom and Gomorrah, who were wicked with their bodies and with their money. He settled himself with the wicked like himself.

The Gemara, in Sanhedrin,[3] writes: The people of Sodom were so bad *because* God supplied them with an abundance of bread and of gold and silver.[4] And they said: "We will shut up our country that no stranger should enter it, for they only come here to carry off our gold and silver."

They used also to pervert judgment by giving contrary verdicts. When one had beaten a fellow citizen and made him bleed, the judges decided that the victim should pay the offender a fee, as to a phlebotomist, for bleeding him. Once upon a time, Eliezer, Abraham's servant, came to Sodom, and the people there having beaten and wounded him so that he lost much blood, he summoned the aggressors before the magistrates, and they decided that he should pay them for bleeding him as a remedy. Then Eliezer took a big stone and threw it at a magistrate, and so wounded him that he bled, "Pay me," said he to the magistrate, "for that remedial operation, and I will pay the others for theirs."

[1] "From the east" is more literal according to the original Hebrew, מקדם, as in Chap. xi. 2, and elsewhere. Eastward, or towards the east, is usually expressed by קדמה.

[2] קדמון, Kadmon, has the meaning The *First*, the *Eternal*, the *Antecedent;* hence it means GOD. In the text it is intended to say that Lot apostatised from the God of Abraham and embraced the idolatrous religion of Sodom

[3] Fol. 109A.

[4] God's goodness was the cause of the wickedness of the people of Sodom. The same was the case with the sons of Abraham, for in *Sanhedrin*, fol. 102A, we read as follows: Owing to the abundance of gold and silver with which the children of Israel have been supplied, they have made for themselves a god of gold. Riches corrupt the heart, and, according to the Talmud, God is the cause of all evil.

They had also (in their guest chamber) a bedstead for visitors. If the visitor happened to be longer than the bedstead they chopped off his legs; if shorter, they drew him till he was the length of the bedstead. They ordered Eliezer to lie down on that bedstead, but he said, "Since my Mistress Sarah died I made a vow not to lie on any bedstead."

When a poor man came there to beg, they gave him no bread, but every one gave him a coin (as alms), with the name of the donor written on it, and when the beggar died of starvation, each got back his coin.

A girl once gave a beggar a morsel of bread secretly. When she went to draw water she carried out to him a morsel of bread with a little water. The inhabitants, on learning this, smeared the girl all over with honey, and placed her before the bees, which devoured her. Thus her great cry came before God. This is the meaning of the text: "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is GREAT," which means the cry of the girl, for "rabbah"[1] (great) in the holy tongue signifies (also) girl.

14 *And the Lord said unto Abram, after Lot was separated from him.* This text teaches us that God did not speak with Abram during the time that Lot was with him. "After that Lot was separated from him," God told Abram, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth," which cannot be numbered. "Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it," and take a legal possession of the land, "for I will give it unto thee," and unto thy children.

CHAPTER XIV.—1 *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel.* This was in the days of Nimrod, who is called

[1] רבה "*Rabbah*" in chap. xviii. 20, or in any other passage in the whole Bible, has no signification as given in the text by the Commentator. *Rivah* in Aramaic means *girl*, and as the two words begin and end with the same letters, and as the two words sound very nearly alike also, the Rabbis manage all the rest, and say and teach as they find to suit them. The legends in the Talmud vary considerably from those given here respecting the people of Sodom. See *Sanhedrin*, fol. 109B.

Amraphel, which sounds Amar-phul,[1] and signifies: "He said cast;" *i.e.* cast Abraham into the furnace.

The four kings being very powerful, went to war with the five kings and smote them. Yet Abraham went to war with these four kings because they captured Lot, and this was because, being a wicked man, Lot settled among the people of Sodom.[2]

10 *And the vale of Siddim was full of lime pits.* Where the battle was there were deep lime pits in which the five kings fell and perished. This God did because many people did not believe that Abraham was cast into the fire and escaped. But now having seen that God helped the king of Sodom out of the deep pits, they were naturally led to believe that Abraham might possibly have been cast into the fire and came out of it alive.

13 *And there came one that escaped,*[3] *and told Abram.* That was Og, the king of Bashan, who is called Palit, *i.e.* the *escaped one*, for he escaped from the battle of the four kings, and he told Abraham of the capture of Lot. Og did this in order that Abraham should pursue the kings and be killed by them.

Some sages say: The reason why Og was called Palit (the escaped one) was because he escaped from the Deluge.[4] But he was called Og because he came unto Abraham on the eve of Passover, when Passover-cakes are baked, and Og (in Hebrew) means cake.

And Abraham gained the battle against the mighty kings.

*He dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite*, when he was told of Lot's capture. Mamre was a friend of Abraham, whom

[1] אמרפול, Amar-phul. The signification here given is simply fanciful.

[2] See Note 2, p. 76, *ante.*

[3] פליט (from פלט). One escaped by flight from battle and slaughter. See Note 2, p. 72, *ante.*

[4] According to some, Og fled for refuge to the land of Israel, where there was no deluge. See *Zevachim*, fol. 113B, and *Niddah*, fol. 61A.

he advised to be circumcised, for he thus reasoned with Abraham: "If God should wish to have thy whole body thou wouldest certainly give it to him, how much more so the foreskin! The God who delivered thee from the fire in Ur of the Chaldees, and from the famine, and from the kings, the same God will now also deliver thee that thou wilt be preserved alive."

The reason why he was called Mamre was to show forth the four things which he intimated to Abraham that God had delivered him from, viz. from the kings, circumcision, famine, and fire.[1]

14 *He armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen,* to pursue the kings and retake Lot and his household. Our sages, say: He went in pursuit with *Eliezer alone,* whose *name* has the numerical value of three hundred and eighteen.[2]

Rabbi B'chai asks: Is it conceivable that the text should say distinctly *three hundred and eighteen,* and should not say distinctly that *Eliezer alone* went. But the explanation is this: Abraham took with him 318 men, and when he came to the battle he proclaimed: "He who has any sin in him let him

[1] It will be seen from this and the preceding paragraph that it was Mamre who persuaded Abraham to be circumcised; thus confirming the view of modern critics that circumcision was of heathen origin.

ממרא. By the rule of *Notricon,* each letter of Mamre is converted into a word. The first letter is *Mem* and forms the word M'lachim, which signifies *kings;* the second letter is also *Mem* and is converted into the word Milah, which signifies *circumcision;* the third letter is *Resh* and is turned into the word Rââv, *i.e. famine;* the fourth letter is *Aleph,* which forms the word Aish, which means *fire.* A wise man will understand. Let us apply the rule. By the same rule *m, m, r, e,* form the initials of the following four words: *master masons rise early.* Hence it is plain that M'mre was a master mason, and so was Abraham indeed, for it is written: "And Abraham rose early" (Gen. xxii. 3). A "wise" Jew will appreciate this.

[2] See List of Numerical Values of the Hebrew Letters, at the end of Preface.

return home,"—after the manner observed in the wars of Israel—and *all* returned except Eliezer. Hence it is said (in the Hebrew text) "*vayareck*," [1] which has two meanings; 1. he *armed* his trained servants; and 2. he *emptied* his trained servants by letting them (leave their ranks and) return home. Abraham went with *Eliezer alone.*

*That his brother was taken captive.* The question is: Why does the text call him brother when he was but his *brother's son?* The text here intimates that though Abraham was a just man and Lot was not, yet did Abraham not forsake him, but pursued (with such zeal to deliver him) as if he had been a real brother.

*And pursued them unto Dan.* There his strength failed him, because at that place Israel would subsequently serve idols.[2]

15 *And divided himself against them, by night.* On their account he divided himself with his servants to pursue them. The sages say the explanation is this: God divided the night; in the first half, He, by a Divine miracle, slew the kings; and the other half night God preserved for His children in Egypt, when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain on the Passover.

Rabbi B'chai adds the following explanation: Abraham divided the night on their account; the first half he pursued till he overtook them; and in the other half night he killed them.

17 *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him in* a valley where all idolaters assembled themselves, and where they made Abraham a king over them.

18 *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine*, and thus honoured Abraham although he had slain his children the four kings. The Midrash writes that Melchizedek was the son of Shem the son of Noah.[3]

19 *And said Blessed be Abram of the most high God.* . . .

[1] וירק [2] 1 Kings xii. 28, 29. [3] Heb. vii. 3.

*And blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.* Because he blessed Abraham first, and then praised God afterwards, therefore God punished Melchizedek and took away the priesthood from him and gave it to Abraham. And Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, because at that time he was still a priest.

21, 22 *And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons* which thou hast taken from the kings, and keep the goods and the money for thyself. Abraham replied: "I have sworn unto God that I will not touch a shoelatchet nor a thread, from all that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

23 *From a thread even to a shoelatchet.* Our sages say: God said unto Abraham, "Because of the merit of what thou hast said, 'From a thread,' I will reward thee by giving thy children a (valuable) Precept about threads, and that is the Precept of *Fringes*;[1] and because thou hast said: 'To a shoelatchet,' that thou wilt not touch even a shoelatchet belonging to the king of Sodom, therefore shall thy children have the Precept of *Phylacteries*,[2] which are made of leather straps, and also the Precept of *loosing the shoe*[3] which is done with leather straps."

CHAPTER XV.—1 *Fear not Abram, I am thy shield.* God has here said three things unto Abraham. The first is, Abraham was afraid that the children of the kings he had slain

[1] Num. xv. 38. This Precept is esteemed to be of greater importance and of more value than all the Precepts of the Law put together, as it is no less than three times said in the Talmud: שקולה מצות ציצית כנגד כל המצות כולן, *i.e.* The Precept of Fringes is equivalent to all the Precepts, even to all of them together. *Shevuoth*, fol. 29A, and elsewhere.

As a reward for observing this Precept, the Talmud promises every Jew to have 2,800 slaves to wait upon him. See *Tal. Misc.*, p. 260, 19. In fact the Fringes, together with the Phylacteries and the Mezuzah, preserve one from *sin*. *Ibid.*, p. 123 note.

[2] Deut. vi. 8.

[3] *Ibid.* xxv. 9.

would revenge themselves on him, therefore God said unto him, "*Fear not.*" The second is, God promised him that he would have a son, therefore He said: "Thy exceeding great reward;" thy reward will be very much, and He says "*Great,*" with two *He's*,[1] to intimate that when Abram is become AbraHam and Sarai is become SaraH, thus each having the letter *He* in their name, they will have children. And this is the reason that Rachel, because she had no letter *He* in her name,[2] gave BilHaH her handmaid unto Jacob, for she had two *He's* in her name, in order that one *He* should enable Rachel to have children. The third thing was, God promised Abraham the World to Come. But Abraham did not understand what God had promised him, for God did not tell him *plainly* that He would give him children and the World to Come. Therefore said Abraham, "What wilt Thou give me?" "What use will it be to me when I have no children? Who will be mine heir?" But God replied: "Do not be anxious, thy servant Eliezer shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

5 *And he brought him forth abroad*, and showed him the stars, and said unto him: "As thou art unable to number the stars, so numerous shall be thy children; they shall be innumerable."

Our sages say: God took Abraham from this world up to heaven, and said unto him, "Thou art now higher than the constellations, and though thy star and thy constellation (or *luck*) augur that thou wilt have no children, yet canst thou alter thy luck, because I have exalted thee above the influences of the stars."[3] The text means: "*And he brought him forth abroad.*"

[1] הרבה *Harbeh, i.e.* "*Great*"; the word commences with the letter *He* and ends the letter *He;* thus we have two *He's* in the word "Great.

[2] It may be necessary to inform the reader that the *Ch* in the English spelling of Rachel is in Hebrew a single letter having a guttural sound nearly like KH, not like H.

[3] The occult science of astrology must have been familiar to the Rabbis

6 *And he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness.* Abraham believed in God and counted it as a righteousness (or benevolence) on the part of God for promising to give him children, as he was not worthy of the same. Thus writes the Ramban.

Rabbi B'chai writes: God counted it to Abraham for righteousness, and for a great thing in *believing* that which God had promised him.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks the question: Why, when God promised Abraham that He would give him children, he at once believed, and asked for no sign; whereas, when God told him that his children will inherit the land, he did wish for a sign? The reply is this: Abraham said, "Give me a sign that my children will inherit the land, thus shall I, as a matter of course, know that Thou wilt give me children."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac, asks another question. Why did Abraham say: "*Seeing I go childless*"? Had not God already told him: "*For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever; and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth*"? The answer to this question is: Abraham thought that God's promise to give the land to his seed meant to his *family*, or to his *household*, but not to an own son

of old. In *Shabbath*, fol. 156A, we read: Rabbi Chanina said to his disciples: "Go, and tell the son of Laive, The planetary influence does not depend upon days, but hours. He that is born under the influence of the sun (no matter on what day), will have a beaming face . . . no prosperity will attend him, if given to thieving. If born under the influence of Venus (נוגה) he will be rich and incontinent. If under the influence of Mercury (כוכב), he will be bright and wise, because that planet is the attendant scribe on the sun. If under the influence of the moon, he will be subject to affliction, . . . and prosperity will attend him if given to thieving. If under the influence of Jupiter (צדק), he will be benevolent. If under the influence of Mars (מאדים), he will be a blood-shedder, that is, a phlebotomist, a highwayman, a butcher, or a circumciser." Not to believe in these things is not to believe in the Talmud, and not to believe in the Talmud is not to be a believer in the God of Israel. He who rejects even one of the niceties of the scribes is an infidel. "He hath despised the word of the Lord." *Sanhedrin*, fol. 99A.

that would come out of himself; and therefore he was afraid, as Eliezer was also of his household, and the *first* in his house and equal to a son, *he* would perhaps be his heir. God therefore said unto Abraham, "*This* (Eliezer) *shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir;*" and the text is therefore more explicit here than (anywhere else) in all the Torah: "*out of thine own bowels.*"

Yet another question asks the Toldoth Yitzkhac. The Torah says: And he *believed in the Lord*, what God had promised him; this implies that *now* he believed, but before this, God forbid! he did *not* believe. But the explanation is this: *Now* Abraham believed that God would give him children, because God said explicitly that out of his own bowels shall come forth children; but before, Abraham thought that one of his family, or Eliezer, would be his heir.

7 *I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees.* God said unto Abraham: "From the time I brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, and worked a miracle for thee, it was My intention to give thee the land." Abraham thought, If my children commit sin, or if the idolaters repent, (in that case) God will not give the land to my children; hence Abraham said: "Let me know whether my children will for a *certainty* inherit the land, even when my children sin, or when the idolaters repent." So God assured him: "*They* shall surely inherit the land."

Rabbi B'chai writes: It is related in a Midrash, that when Abraham was born a star in heaven appeared in the east and swallowed up four stars from the four sides of the world. The wise men said unto Nimrod, "A son is now born unto Terah whose children will inherit the whole world. Our counsel is, that thou shouldest give Terah much gold and silver that he should give thee his son, and that thou shouldest kill him." Nimrod at once sent for Terah, and said unto him: "Give me thy son, and I will give thee much gold and silver." Terah replied to Nimrod in a parable: "One said to a horse: 'I will

give thee plenty of oats to eat, but let me first cut off thy head. The horse replied: 'Of what use will the oats be to me when thou cuttest off my head? Who will then eat the oats?' So likewise who will inherit the gold and silver when thou killest my son?" Then said Nimrod unto him, "I perceive from thy words that yesterday was yet another son born unto thee." Terah declared that he instantly died; but Nimrod was determined that he would have the living child that was born yesterday. Then went Terah and took a newborn babe from one of his female slaves and brought it to Nimrod, and hid his son Abraham in a cave thirteen years. God provided him there with two stones; from one flowed oil, and from the other honey and fine flour.

When thirteen years of age, he came out of the cave and began to think: Who created heaven and earth and me? When he saw the sun, he thought *it* was God, and prayed to it a whole day. In the evening the sun set, and as the moon and the stars appeared he thought the moon to be the Lord and the stars his servants, and so he prayed to the moon. When at dawn the moon and the stars also disappeared, he concluded that this also cannot be God, and he found out that God who is in heaven is God.

8 *Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?* Abraham said unto God: "Let me know by what merit shall my children inherit the land?" God replied: "By the merit of sacrifices;" and therefore it is said

9 *Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.* God showed him by these that his children would bring (in the time of the Temple) sacrifices of cattle and of fowls.

10 *And he divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another;* and he passed between the pieces, and swore that he would serve God for ever; and if ever he should not serve Him, then might he be cut in pieces like the cattle!

And God (on His part) swore unto Abraham, that He would give him the land. And He sent His messenger, that is the fire, and the fire passed between the pieces, as if God Himself had passed, and swore that He would give him the land.

And Abraham divided the cattle, "*but the birds divided he not.*" This was intended to typify that Israel, being likened unto birds, shall remain indestructible in the world. "And when the fowls came down upon the pieces (carcases), Abraham drove them away."

12 *And, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.* And that was because God showed Abraham that his children would be in captivity. Although God swore that they should inherit the land, yet, if they be wicked they shall be driven out of it.[1]

13 *Know thou of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger,* and will be obliged to work four hundred years. The captivity of Egypt *began from the birth* of Isaac. Although they were not yet in Egypt, yet from the birth of Isaac they had no land, and were equal to strangers.

Rabbi B'chai writes: The reason why this captivity lasted four hundred years was, because they had an *evil eye,* and would not give alms to the poor, and they are called "*Ra-ayin,*"[2] the numerical value of which is *four hundred.*

14 *And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge.* God said unto Abraham, "The nation which will force thy children to hard labour, will I judge, and bring upon them ten plagues."

15 *And thou shalt go to thy father in peace.* That is, thou shalt *not see* the captivity. And from this we infer that Terah, Abraham's father, had repented before he died; for had he died a wicked man (in his wickedness, and without repentance),

[1] On every festival the Jews solemnly repeat: ומפני חטאינו, "Because of our sins we have been exiled from our native country, and removed from our own land."

[2] רע עין, *i.e.* Evil-eye. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters is 400.

God would *not* have told Abraham, "Thou shalt go to thy father"; for Abraham was a righteous man, and how is it conceivable that he should go to a wicked man in the other world?

The Ramban asks: When God's decree was that Israel should be slaves in Egypt and should be afflicted with forced labour, why are the Egyptians guilty, that God said He would punish them? The reply is: The Egyptians thought out much evil and made Israel to serve with rigour; and what they wanted was, not the labour, but to efface Israel out of the world, which was more than the Divine decree authorised, and would have cast all their children into the water, therefore God punished the Egyptians.

*Thou shalt be buried in a good old age.* Thou shalt see no evil in thy children. This teaches us, that during his lifetime Ishmael repented, and Esau had not become so very wicked as yet. And this is why Abraham died five years before his time,—that he might not see Esau worship idols; for on the day in which Abraham died Esau worshipped idols. The distress in seeing wickedness in one's children is very great, and therefore God said unto Abraham: "It is better that thou diest five years before thy time, in order that thou shouldest not see any wickedness in thy children."

16 *But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again.* God said unto Abraham: "Three generations of thy children shall be in captivity, and the fourth generation shall return hither to the land of Israel." Because the measure of the people that dwell in the land of Israel "*is not yet full*," therefore the time to drive them out of their land is not yet come; for God pays only when the measure of iniquities is full.

17 *Behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp.* God sent smoke and fire to pass between the pieces of flesh in token that He had sworn unto Abraham that He would give him the land of Canaan.

CHAPTER XVI.—1 *Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no*

*children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.* This handmaid was the daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt; "for," said Pharoah, "better let my daughter be a handmaid of Abraham rather than a lady in the house of another," because many miracles were performed for Abraham.

3 *And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar,* and gave her to Abraham, because she saw that she had been already ten years in the land of Canaan and as yet had no children. She thought that for the merit in giving her maidservant to her husband, God would also favour her with children.

*And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.* Abraham did so, to please Sarah; but it was not his intention that the legitimate children should spring from Hagar, and therefore it is specified "*Sarai Abram's wife,*" although we knew long before that Sarai was Abram's wife.

The Ramban writes: The text shows us that when even Sarai had given Hagar to Abram, she still said, "Abram is *my* husband, and *I am* his wife. I will not be divorced from him." And therefore it is also stated, "And Sarai Abram's wife *took* Hagar;" for Hagar was ashamed before Sarai. And the text teaches us, that when one lives with his wife *ten years* and has no children, he is to divorce her;[1] as the text says, "After—at the end of *ten years,*" that Abram had no children by Sarai, then Sarai gave Hagar to Abram.

4 *And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived.* As soon as he came to her she *immediately* conceived. Hence Hagar said of Sarah, that she must not have been really pious, for she had been with Abram for many years and did not conceive, "whereas I (said Hagar) conceived *from the first time.*" "And she despised her mistress, Sarai."

5 *And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee!* "Thou listenest to my disgrace, thou hearest how Hagar disgraces me, and thou art silent!"

[1] This is a law of the Talmud. See *Genesis acc. to the Talmud,* p. 293, v. 3.

Moreover Sarai said unto Abram: "Thou oughtest to have prayed also on *my behalf*, that we *both* should have children; but thou hast prayed on *thy behalf alone!* Thou hast said, 'Seeing *I* go childless,' and thou didst not remember me! '*The Lord judge between me and thee!*' Let Him punish thee for it!"

And Sarai set an evil eye upon the child conceived by Hagar, so that she miscarried. The sages deduce from this, that he who desires a judgment of God to come upon another, suffers himself in the end. For Sarai wronged herself (by sinning in calling for Divine judgment) so that she died forty-eight years before her time; for she should have lived as long as her husband Abraham.

6 *And Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee. Thus Sarai afflicted her with hard labour.*[1] The Ramban writes: Because Abraham allowed Hagar to be afflicted, and because Sarah did so afflict her, therefore do the children of Hagar rule over the children of Abraham and Sarah, and afflict them[2] (in return). And Hagar fled from Sarah.

7, 8 *And the angel of the Lord found her. . . . And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou?* Rabbi B'chai asks: What need had the angel to be so particular as to say, "*Hagar, Sarai's maid,*" as we already knew long since that she was Sarai's maid? (Reply) The text teaches us that the angel appeared to her on account of her being so worthy as to be a maidservant of Sarah; and the angel in-

[1] The comment tells us in the first verse of this chapter, that Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh; at all events we know that she was an Egyptian, and Abraham's wife "*afflicted her with hard labour.*" Pharaoh and his people, it would seem, treasured up this conduct towards Hagar, and subsequently retaliated it *measure for measure* on Abraham's children. Exod. i. 13, 14.

[2] The Ramban evidently alludes to the great oppression of the Jews in Moslem countries, for the Jews generally believe that all Moslems are Ishmaelites, or *Hagarites.*

timated to her that both she and her children should for ever be servants to Sarah and her children (?).

10 *And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress and be afflicted under her hand.* And afterwards again came an angel and said unto Hagar, "*Thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.*" Thy son shall "*be a wild man;*" he will war with all people, and all people will war with him.

15 *And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his name Ishmael.* For the spirit of prophecy rested upon him, and he just hit upon the very name which the angel told Hagar.

The Ramban writes: Hagar was bashful naming the child, because she was not Abram's wife (but only his concubine), therefore she said unto Abraham, the angel told her to call her child Ishmael, and Abraham listened to her, and called him Ishmael.

16 *And Abram was fourscore and six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael.* The text tells us this in order that we should know that Ishmael was thirteen years old when Abraham circumcised him, and he did not resist it.

CHAPTER XVII.—1 *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God.* "I am a God that can do all things, therefore, fear not that the circumcision will make thee ill, for I can restore thee to health again."

*Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.* That is to say: Be not divided in thy person, that thy heart be not like thy *mouth.*

Another explanation is: When thou wilt circumcise thyself, thou wilt be perfect before Me, for the foreskin is a blemish in thee. * * * *

5 *Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham.* Thy name shall be AbraHam, with a *He*; because with circumcision thou wilt certainly gain (the perfection of) *five* members properly to serve God

with.[1] Also AbraHam (with the letter *He*) means, A Father of *all* the nations.[2]

13 *And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.* The circumcision shall be a sign in your body that ye shall serve God for ever, and that sign shall not be done away from you. Circumcision is better than a sacrifice, for a sacrifice is bought with money, but circumcision is a personal sacrifice.

The Pirké de Rabbi Eliezer writes: Abraham circumcised himself on the Day of Atonement, and every Day of Atonement God looks on the blood and pardons our sins.[3] * * * *

17 *Then Abraham fell upon his face.* Previous to his circumcision Abraham could not *stand* before the *Shechinah*, but after that it is said: "Abraham *stood* before the *Lord*."[4]

*Thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be*, which means, A mistress over the whole world.

*Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed.* He laughed that he and Sarah, being old, should have children. And God said: "I will bless Sarah with much milk in her breasts." For people had not believed that Sarah had given birth to a child, but said that she took a strange child, and adopted it. But when Sarah weaned Isaac, Abraham made a great banquet, and invited to it all the great people with their wives. The women brought their infants with them, but their wet nurses they did not bring. When the infants began to cry, they said unto Sarah, "Give thou our infants to suck," and Sarah

[1] *He* is the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and has the numerical value of *five*.

[2] המון גוים literally means "a *multitude* of nations," but it does not mean *all*.

[3] In the Talmud, *Yoma*, fol. 5A, we have the following, אין כפרה אלא בדם, *i.e.* There is no atonement but by blood, for it is said (Lev. xvii. 11), "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul," or, as we have it in the New Test. (Heb. ix. 22), "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

[4] Chap. xviii. 22.

suckled all the children, for God blessed her with much milk. Then all the women knew that Sarah had borne a child.[1]

The Midrash writes: God took the (last letter) *Jod* (from the name) of Sarai,[2] and divided it (numerically) into two, half He gave unto Abraham, and half remained with Sarah.

But the *Jod* complained before God: "Why hast thou taken me away from (the name of) a righteous woman?" But God replied: "I will restore thee to a righteous man, who will first be called *Hosea* (without the letter *Jod* in his name), but afterwards he shall be called Jehoshua—with a *Jod*."

*Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?* It is difficult to conceive why Abraham wondered about it, since God had promised to give him children. What is more, since we find even in our own times that an old man of ninety years can have children. Nay, Abraham himself forty years later had *many* children by Keturah. The reply is: Abraham did *not wonder*, but said thus: "When I was young and strong I had no children, and now, when I and Sarah are old, that we should have children must be a miracle from God, and I believe that *God can do all things*." Abraham rejoiced, and this is why God said unto Abraham:

19 *And thou shalt call his name Isaac*, which means joy. Because thou hast rejoiced, and because the name of Isaac came from God, therefore Isaac's name remained unchanged. But Abraham's name was changed. First, he was called Abram, and then Abraham; likewise was the name of Jacob changed, when God called him Israel.

Rabbi B'chai writes: Abraham's name was changed because he became a Father of many nations; and the name of Jacob was changed because an angel had war with him, and he overcame the angel; but nothing of the kind happened to Isaac,

[1] The same story, but with considerable variations, is found in *Bava-Metzia*, fol. 87A.

[2] שרי.

therefore he was not re-named. Isaac was so named, because the *Jod*, the first letter of Isaac's name (the numerical value of which is *ten*) points to the *Ten Trials of Abraham;* and the *Tzaddi* (the second letter of Isaac's name = 90) points to Sarah's age, which was ninety (when she conceived); and the *Kheth* (the third letter in Isaac's name = 8) has reference to circumcision which takes place on the eighth day; and the *Koph* (the last letter in Isaac's name = 100) stands for the hundred years, Abraham's age when he begat Isaac.

20 *And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee.* God said unto Abraham, "I have heard thy prayer on behalf of Ishmael, and I will give him twelve princes." He said *Princes*, and not children, because God said, that Ishmael would have twelve children, who would be great kings, greater than the kings of the world; and they shall be called N'seeim (Princes), which means *Clouds*, that is to say, although they will be great kings, yet their kingdom shall ultimately be lost from the world as a cloud that passeth away; yet, "*I will make him a great nation.*"

23 *And circumcised the flesh of their foreskin.* Abraham first circumcised the three hundred and eighteen men, the servants of his household, and then he circumcised himself; for had he first circumcised himself, he would have been weak, and unable properly to circumcise his household.

*And it shall be a token of the covenant.* "Circumcision shall be a token and a testimony that thou hast received thy religion from Me." Three things are designated in the Law as a token and a testimony that God is a *Unity*, and they are these: The Sabbath, the Phylacteries, and Circumcision. A man must have by him two witnesses to testify of God. On week days a man has by him the phylacteries[1] and circumcision, and on Sabbath days he needs not the phylacteries, for the Sabbath itself is a token; and thus he has by him two

[1] Phylacteries are worn on week days only, but never on the Sabbath nor on any festival, when it is unlawful even to *touch* them.

witnesses, the Sabbath and circumcision. The Midrash writes: circumcision is a great commandment, *it delivers from hell.*[1]

END OF SECTION THREE.

CHAPTER XVIII.—1 *And the Lord appeared unto him.* God appeared unto Abraham when he had performed the Divine command, and circumcised himself. It is said: "And He appeared unto *him*," but it is not said unto *whom*, for it refers to the above, where it is stated how Abraham had circumcised himself. Here it says: "God appeared unto him" as an act of visitation of the sick, for it was on the *third day*[2] after the circumcision.

*By the oaks*[3] *of Mamre.* (A.V. in the plains of Mamre). God appeared unto Abraham in the city of Mamre. Mamre was a friend of Abraham, whom he counselled publicly to circumcise himself,[4] therefore God appeared in his city.

It is well-known that God appears on earth with fire, water, wind, as it is plainly stated by all the prophets, but with Abraham God appeared on a tree, and therefore it is stated: "*By the oaks of Mamre*," which signifies: "On the trees of the city of Mamre." By this God showed unto Abraham, that as a tree, which, though old, yet bears fruit, so also Abraham, though old, would have children.

*And he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.* He sat in the heat of the day that the sun (with healing in his wings) should be a healing to his circumcision.

Another explanation is: He sat in the *door* to see whether strangers pass by, that he should invite them into the house. But God caused great heat, that strangers should not be able to travel, in order that they should not trouble him as he was

[1] Comp. *Treasures of the Tal.*, p. 73, 21.
[2] Comp. chap. xxxiv. 25.
[3] אֵלוֹן, *i. e.* an oak.
[4] Vide Note, p. 79 *ante.*

weak. And when God saw that Abraham felt distressed, because no strangers were coming, He sent three angels in the guise of men. And who were the three angels? One was *Michael*, to inform Sarah that she would have a son; the second was *Raphael*, to heal Abraham's (wound of the) circumcision; and the third was *Gabriel*, to overthrow Sodom. Why did not *one* angel perform all this? (Reply) Because one angel cannot do both good and evil; for one angel exercises mercy and love, and another angel executeth judgement. And why did not Michael heal Abraham? The reply is: Because Raphael being appointed over healing remedies, no other angel dares encroach on his province, and he had to heal Abraham. Afterwards he went thence to deliver Lot.

2 *And he ran to meet them.* As Abraham saw the angels standing on one spot he inferred that they did not wish to trouble him, and he ran to meet and invite them to come in (as his guests).

The Gemara, in treatise Bava-Metzia,[1] asks: It is stated, "They stood *by him*," if so what need had he to run to meet them? The reply is: The angels at first stood by him, but when they saw that he was ill they went away, *and he ran to meet them.*

Therefore is it said they stood *over him*,[2] because usually one sees a man come from a distance first, and afterwards come nearer. But in this case Abraham did not see them from a distance; they came upon him suddenly, as if they had dropped from heaven, therefore it is said, "And, lo, three men stood *over him;*" and he, thinking them to be great saints or prophets, ran to meet them, saying to the chief of them—

3 *My Lord . . . pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant;* for if the chief would not go away the other two angels would also not go away. And by what did Abraham recognise the chief? That one who walked in the middle

[1] Fol. 86B. [2] עליו, above *or* over him.

(between the other two), him did Abraham take to be the chief.

Another explanation is: Abraham said unto God,[1] pass not away from me, but wait for me till I get the strangers into my house. From this we learn that entertaining strangers is (more meritorious) than receiving the presence of the Shechinah.[2]

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: It is evident that Abraham spoke to one angel only; because the angel that came to announce the conception of Sarah was certain to remain, and the one that came to heal Abraham from the (pain of) circumcision was as certain to remain; therefore Abraham spoke only to the third angel, who was on his way to overthrow Sodom, and said unto him: "I pray thee remain thou also; though thou hast nothing to do here, but because thy friends remain here of necessity, remain thou also to please them." This explains why it is stated: "*And he said, My Lord,*" for he spoke to one only; but when it is further said: "And wash your feet . . . and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on," he spoke to them all. This then is the explanation: First he spoke only to the angel of Sodom, that he should remain in honour of the company, and afterwards he invited all to dine with him.

Although Abraham was weak on account of the circumcision, yet he exerted himself in running to meet the strangers, and invited them to his place, and said:

4 *Let a little water, I pray you be fetched, and wash your feet.* Abraham thought perhaps they were Arabs, who worship

[1] In *Shevuoth*, fol. 35B, we are told: That all the names usually applied to God in the Law, in connection with Abraham, should be so understood, except אֲדֹנָי, "My Lord," which refers to the greatest of the three angels. Chanina, the nephew of Rab. Joshua, and Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah, say, in the name of Rab. Elazer the Modoaite: *In this instance also* it refers to יְהוָה Jehovah, mentioned in the first verse. Our commentator is of the same opinion as Rabbi Elazer the Modoaite.

[2] *Shabbath*, fol. 127A. Comp. Heb. xiii. 2.

the dust of their feet,[1] and he would not allow an idol (*i.e.* the alleged object of idolatrous worship) to come into his house.

The sages say: Because Abraham did not personally offer the water to his guests, but through a messenger; therefore when his children were in need of water in the wilderness, God did not give it to them in person, from heaven, but through a messenger, namely through Moses, who was obliged to smite the rock to obtain water for them. But of the bread it is stated that Abraham said:

5 *And I will fetch a morsel of bread.* (Abraham himself fetched the bread), therefore God Himself gave his children in the wilderness bread from heaven, that is the Manna; for God pays *measure for measure.* From this we learn that the righteous promise little but do much, for Abraham said: "And I will fetch a *morsel* of bread," and then he brought *three calves;* but the wicked promise much but do not even a little, for Ephron the Hittite said unto Abraham: "I make thee a present of the field,"[2] but in the end he would accept only shekels that were *weighty.*[3]

*After that ye shall pass on, for therefore are ye come to your servant.* "First eat with me, and then ye shall travel on; for because ye have come to your servant, therefore ye *shall* eat with me."

*And they said, So do as thou hast said.* The question is: Can it be fitting that strangers should say to the master of the house: So do as thou hast said, and give us to eat? It is unmannerly to say so. But the answer is: The strangers had blessed Abraham, and told him, that thou mayest be worthy again to do so as thou hast said, viz. to make feasts when his

[1] In *Bava-Metzia*, fol. 86B, we read, that when the angels were asked to wash their feet, they said: וכי בעֲרביים חשדתנו שהם משתחוים לאבק רגליהם, *i.e.* "Dost thou suspect us for Arabs, who worship the dust of their feet?"

[2] Evidently referring to chap. xxiii. 15, "What is that betwixt me and thee." [3] *Ibid.*, ver. 16.

wife Sarah should have a son. Thus writes the Toldoth Yitzkhac. But the Ramban writes: The angels said, "So do as thou hast said," to give to eat under the tree, that we should not be detained long, for when one gets into a house he is unavoidably delayed.

Rabbi B'chai writes: They have said: "*So do, as thou hast said,*" meaning, to give us a morsel of bread, but not to make a great dinner. Another explanation is: They said unto Abraham, "Do not detain us long, do immediately prepare our food, *as thou hast said*, for we are in haste to go on."

6 *Make ready quickly three measures of meal.* The reason why he ordered *three* measures was, that he should give each an equal portion, that there should be no jealousy at the meal. The Ramban writes: He ordered Sarah to take three measures of fine flour, and sift it finer, that the flour should be *very fine.*

7 *And Abraham ran unto the herd.* Although Abraham had many servants, yet, in honour of the guests, he himself ran unto the herd, and he took three calves to honour his guests alike. Abraham took the calves and gave them to Ishmael to dress them, and this he did in order to accustom Ishmael to observe the precepts.

8 *And he took butter and milk.* In Shabbath, Chapter M'phannîn (fol. 127A), Rabbi Yochanan says: The precept of hospitality to strangers is *greater* than the study of the Law.[1]

[1] This is not correct. Rabbi Yochanan says: גדולה הכנסת אורחין כהשכמת בית המדרש, *i.e.* Hospitality is as great *as* early attendance at college; as great as, but not greater, than early attendance at school where the Law is studied. Rabbi Yochanan also gives the following: Six precepts, the interest of *which* a man enjoys in this world, and the capital remains for him intact in the world to come; and they are these: Hospitality to strangers, visiting the sick, devotion in prayer, early attendance at school (or early rising for school), training his children to study the Law, and judging neighbours charitably. In the next line but one, another list of additional precepts is given, and is wound up thus: But *the study of the Law outweighs them all.* And this is daily repeated by every Jew in his morning prayer. *The study of the Law is above all.*

The Yalkut writes: For the merit of Abraham in giving water to strangers, his children became worthy to be rewarded with the well in the wilderness for forty years, which followed them in all places; and when Israel sinned in the wilderness the Well tarried and remained behind, till the disciples of the wise prayed and said: "For the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Spring up, O Well!" (Num. xxi. 17) and immediately it sprang up.

*And they did eat.* They pretended to eat. From this we learn that a man must not alter a popular custom; for angels do not eat, but they made it appear as if they did eat.[1]

9 *And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? and he said, Behold, in the tent.* This teaches us that a guest should ask the husband, "Where is thy wife?" and of the wife he should ask, "Where is thy husband?" The angels knew where Sarah was, yet they asked, in order to show that she was modest in remaining out of sight, and thus made her more beloved by Abraham; or they asked after her, in order to give her of the Cup of Blessing after the usual repetition of "Grace after Meals."[2]

10 *And he said, I will certainly return next year unto thee,*

[1] Moses, when he ascended into heaven (Ps. lxviii. 18), did not eat, for there the custom is not to eat. *Bava-Metzia*, fol. 86B.

מנהג כדין, "*Custom is as law*," is a proverb amongst the Jews.

[2] The form of "Grace after Meals," which is always repeated in Hebrew after each meal, fills over three octavo pages. When three *adult* Jews have eaten together in one room at the same time, they are bound to say the "Grace after Meals" over a Cup of Blessing, and a certain short sentence is added to the usual form of Grace. When a father, or Rabbi, or a priest is present, or the company consists of ten, or more than ten persons, the short additional sentence is different in its wording. The mistress of the house and the members of the family, male or female, have a *taste* of this Cup of Blessing. The observance of this custom is alluded to in the text. The eating of a piece of bread no larger than the size of an *olive* necessitates the usual washing of hands and the repetition of the long form of Grace, the laws about which are many and most complicated and exacting.

*and Sarah shall already have a son.* This was on Passover, and on the Passover next year the child Isaac was born.

Rabbi B'chai writes: "*According to the time of life*" means, Sarah will have a son according to the time, which is not longer than a year. * * * *

The Chizkûni writes: "*According to the time of life*" is meant that the angels have said, "We will next year return; we shall live then as we live now, for we live for ever."

*And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him;* behind the angel. The Chizkûni writes: "*Which was behind him*" refers to Ishmael, who was behind the angel, that she should not be *alone* with the angels, for they were thought to be men.[1]

11 *Now Abraham and Sarah were old.* It ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of young women.

12 *Therefore Sarah laughed within herself.* Sarah mocked. . . . She said, "the breasts that are dried up, shall they give milk to suckle a child?" "*And my lord being old also?*" And how can I and an old husband have children?

13 *And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety have a child, which am old?* God altered Sarah's words before Abraham, in order that Abraham should bear no hatred towards her, because she said that *he* was old to have children. And from this our sages learn by deduction, that *for the sake of peace* one may tell a lie *which does no one any harm.*[2]

[1] To this day it is customary not to leave Jewish women alone with strangers. Even an infant, provided it be a *boy*, is considered a sufficient guardian for a woman when alone with a stranger.

[2] The qualification is not in the Talmud which the commentator quotes. The original runs thus: A tradition of the School of Rabbi Ishmael teaches: So great is peace, that, for its sake, even the Holy One, blessed be He! tampered with truth; for Sarah had said (disparagingly) "My lord being old also"; but God reported to Abraham that she had said: "And *I* am old." *Yovamoth*, fol. 65B.

Immediately preceding the above we read as follows: Rabbi Ilaa said,

14 *Is anything too hard for the Lord?* God said, "Is there anything hid from Me that I should not be able to do it?"

15 *Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not.* Sarah denied, and said, "I have not mocked" (or sneered), because she was afraid to admit that she had sneered. She was not aware that God told Abraham she had mocked; for had she known this she would not have denied God's word. But Sarah thought that Abraham perceived that she mocked, because she had laughed. Or because she did not believe the good news (that she would have a son), therefore she denied. When Abraham told her: "*Nay, but thou didst sneer,*" she then understood that God told him; then she was silent.

The Ramban writes: Sarah was not aware that God had said she would have a son; for when God said unto Abraham, "Thy wife shall have a son," Abraham did not tell it before Sarah, because he thought God would certainly send an extra angel to Sarah to announce unto her the good tidings, and when the angels came and told her that she should have a son, she thought that they were but men, not angels, therefore she sneered.

*Old and well-stricken in age* (ver. 11). From Adam unto Abraham it is not mentioned that there were aged people in the world, but when Abraham came, he said unto God: "Lord of the Universe! A father and his son walk in the market, and people do not know who is old and who is young; the aged therefore cannot be honoured; it is right that an old man should have grey hair." God said unto Abraham: "Thou hast well spoken, and I will begin with thee," and

in the name of Rabbi Elazer the son of Rabbi Shimon: An untruth may be told in the interest of peace; for Joseph's brethren told him (which was not true—as it is not recorded), "Thy father commanded before he died, saying," etc. (Gen. l. 16). Rabbi Nathan says: To tell an untruth for the sake of peace is (not merely permitted, but) *commanded;* for it is said (1 Sam. xvi. 2), "And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and *say* (imperative, which was not true) I come to sacrifice to the Lord."

made Abraham hoary grey, hence it is stated "*old*," and in Abraham old age was recognised for *the first time.*

And when Isaac came, he said before God: "Lord of the Universe! A man dies without affliction, and he has many afflictions in the other world; therefore it is better that he should have some affliction in this world in order that he might take off a little in this world (from the punishment in the next)." God said: "Thou art right! and I will begin with thee," as it is stated in Scripture: "And his eyes were dim, so that he could not see." [1]

And when Jacob came, he pleaded before God: "When a man dies without (previous) illness, he cannot leave a will for his children." God said: "Thou art right! and I will begin with thee," as it is said: "One told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick." [2]

*Sarah laughed.* When the month Tishri (about October) came, after the angels told her that she would have a son, and there appeared no sign thereof, Sarah sneered at the words of the angels; for, she thought, it is only *six* months to Passover, and I am not pregnant yet. But Abraham (in spite of this) still believed that Sarah would have a son, because he heard it (direct) from God, and Sarah heard it only from the angels, and therefore she supposed they were *false people.*

Although Abraham too laughed when God told him, "Thy wife will bear thee a son," yet the reply is: Abraham did not openly laugh before the people, but "*fell upon his face, and laughed.*" [3] But Sarah went about among people and laughed at it, and therefore it is stated: "Sarah laughed amongst her near relations" [4] (A.V. Sarah laughed within herself), "*saying*," *i.e.* she related it.

[1] Chap. xxvii. 1. [2] Chap. xlviii. 1. [3] Chap. xvii. 17.

[4] By a play on the Hebrew root of קרב with a change of the vowel points, this change of signification is arrived at. This mode of interpreting Scripture is in vogue and much admired. Thus the most solemn truth is often turned into foolishness, "and My people love to have it so" (Jer. v. 31).

The Chizkûni writes a reply in a parable. A woman wishing to rebuke her daughter-in-law, goes and rebukes her own daughter, that the daughter-in-law might take the hint; so likewise God said unto Abraham: "Wherefore did Sarah sneer?" in order that Abraham should understand that he himself did wrong when *he* sneered.

16 *And Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.* Abraham went to accompany the angels, and for this merit God immediately appeared unto him. And how far is the limit of accompanying (strangers in the sense of guests)? One friend with another, till outside the town. A Rabbi with his disciple, a Sabbath day's journey. A disciple and his Rabbi, three miles. A master of the house with his guest, for one mile.

17 *Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I will do unto Sodom?* I love him, because he is pious, and orders his household to do righteousness and judgment. When Abraham heard that God praised him, he humbled himself still more, and said: "*I am dust and ashes.*" From this it should be learned that when a man is praised he should not pride himself, but humble himself the more.

19 *For I know him.* God said: "I love Abraham because he is pious." Rabbi B'chai writes: God said, "I take more care of Abraham than of other righteous men." This is the meaning of "I know him," *i.e.* I make myself known to him to deliver him.

20 *And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great,*—is very great, and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were bad with their person and their money. But their judgment in heaven is gone forth, because they would give no alms to the poor. For a girl once carried out, in her pitcher with which she went to draw water, a slice of bread for a poor man; when the people of Sodom became aware of it, they took the girl and smeared her all over with honey, and bound her hands and feet and placed her before the bees and flies,

till the bees devoured her. Thus her cry came before God, and the text expresses it: "*The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great*"—that the girl cries unto me: for "great"[1] (in Talmudic language) means a girl.

21 *They have done altogether.* God said: "If *all* have sinned and will not repent, I will destroy them; but if not, and if they will repent, I will not destroy them, but I will consider what sufferings to inflict upon them."

23, 24 *And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city.* "Peradventure there be fifty righteous in the five cities, if each city have ten righteous to deliver them (the inhabitants), wilt Thou then destroy them, and wilt thou not spare them for the sake of the righteous which are among them? And if Thou wilt not deliver the wicked for the sake of the righteous, deliver at least the righteous for his own sake."

And Ramban asks: What need was there for Abraham to say "*Within the city*"? He might have said no more than, "Peradventure there be here (some) righteous." But Abraham said thus: "Peradventure righteous strangers have recently come to reside in the city, like Lot, for instance; them also shalt thou deliver."

25 *That be far from thee to do such a thing* (after this manner), *to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the world* (all the earth, A.V.) *do a right judgment? That be far from thee!* "For people will say that it is Thy custom to slay the righteous with the wicked, as Thou hast done by the Deluge and in the generation of the division (or confusion of tongues)."

26, 27 *And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.*

[1] רבה. The meaning of this word depends on its vowel points. If the word reads "Rabbah," it means *great;* if it reads "Ribhah," then it means *a girl.* *See ante*, p. 77.

I will not destroy the *whole* place. *And Abraham answered and said, Peradventure there will be found only forty and five righteous, wilt Thou then on account of five righteous (less) destroy the whole place?* For Abraham pleaded, If there were forty and five righteous, there would be nine righteous for each city. After that Abraham prayed, Should there be only forty righteous, that at least four cities should remain. God answered,

29–32 *I will not do it for forty's sake.* After that Abraham said, "Peradventure should there be only thirty righteous, let then three cities be spared." God answered, "I will not destroy for the sake of thirty." Again Abraham prayed, "Peradventure if there be only twenty righteous." And God said, "I will not destroy for the sake of twenty."

Abraham once more urged if "Peradventure there be only ten;" and God said, "I will not destroy for the sake of the ten righteous."

But for less than ten righteous Abraham did not pray, for if there be not ten righteous, then God does not deliver the world. And this is the reason that in the generation of the Deluge, as there were no more than Noah with his wife, and his three sons with their three wives, thus no more than eight persons, they could not (by their merits) deliver their generation, all of which perished, and they only remained.

Rabbi B'chai asks: What need had Abraham to pray so long? for when God told him that if there be forty righteous he would spare four cities, he ought then to have known that if there were thirty, three cities would be spared; and if twenty, two cities; and if ten, one city. The reply is this: Abraham thought the greater the number of the righteous the greater would be their (joint) merit, for God told him that He would deliver four cities for the sake of forty righteous, but for less than forty (thought he), God would not deliver; therefore he felt obliged to pray for thirty, and for twenty, and for ten. From this we learn that prayer should be made where there

are many people together, for the (joint) merit of many people is very great, and the prayer is more readily accepted. The sages say as much in the Gemara: "The few who observe the law are not to be compared with the many who observe it;"[1] for the (joint) merit of the latter is greater (than that of the former). But God is merciful, and He answered Abraham, that He would pardon even for a few righteous.

CHAPTER XIX.—1 *And the two angels came to Sodom.* And the third angel, who had announced to Sarah that she would have a son, returned to heaven. Here it is asked: Why do the Scriptures in connection with Lot call them angels, whereas in the case of Abraham they are called *men?* The reply is: By Abraham they are called *men*, because angels came to him usually like men; but angels were not in the habit of visiting Lot (so frequently), therefore does Scripture call them angels.

And the angels came to Sodom *at even.* The question is: Why tarried the angels so long between Hebron and Sodom? The answer is: They were angels of mercy, and they waited for Abraham to plead on behalf of Sodom.

*And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.* On that day they made Lot a judge in Sodom.

*And Lot saw and rose up to meet them.* Lot learned of Abraham to respect strangers, therefore he rose up before them, for he supposed them to be men. Rabbi B'chai and the Toldoth Yitzkhac ask: Why did not Lot "run to meet them," as Abraham did? The answer is: By Abraham they came when it was quite light and he could see them from a distance, therefore he ran to meet; whereas they came to Lot "*at even*," in the dark, when Lot could not see them till they came quite near, then he "*rose up to meet them*,"

[1] The passage here quoted as from the Talmud runs thus: אינו דומה מועטים העושים את התורה למרובים העושים: To the best of my knowledge there is no such passage to be found anywhere in the Talmud. But misquotations of this kind are by no means uncommon, perhaps because "*they do no one any harm.*" See ver. 13, p. 100, *ante.*

2 *And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in I pray you.* Lot said unto the angels, "I pray you come into my house, only go in from behind, that the townspeople know not anything of you, for should they know that I have taken in strangers, I am in danger of my life."

*And tarry all night and wash your feet,* from the dust that is upon them. And why did not Lot, as Abraham, first ask them to wash their feet, and then enter the house? The Chizkûni gives a reply: Lot was afraid that when the wicked came and saw that the strangers had clean feet, they would say they had been a long time with Lot, and he did not report it to them.

*And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night,* in order that the townspeople may see how we will overthrow them; perhaps they will repent.

3 *And he pressed upon them greatly,* and they obeyed him. Abraham they obeyed immediately, saying: "*So do, as thou hast said,*[1] we will eat with thee." From this we learn that a person of much esteem is to be obeyed *at once.*

*And he made them a feast.* Lot made them a banquet, and baked Passover-cakes, for it was the feast of Passover, and they did eat.

The angels having asked Lot whether the townspeople were good or bad, he replied that the majority were wicked. As they were thus talking, the whole town, young and old, for there was not one righteous among them to prevent them, called on Lot, and said unto him: "Where are the men which came unto thee? give them up." Lot went out and shut the door after him, and said, "My brethren, do the strangers no harm! I have two daughters, virgins, which have not known man; I will give you my two daughters and do ye with them as you please, but to the men ye shall do nothing, because they came to me and are guests in my house." They replied, "Get aside! thou art a stranger and wilt thou judge us? now will we deal worse with thee than with them." And

they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. The angels stretched out their hands and pulled Lot in and locked the door. And they smote all the men that were before the door with blindness, so that they got tired and could not find the door. And the angels said unto Lot: "Hast thou any children, or sons-in-law in the city? bring them out from here!"

12 *And the angels said unto Lot: Hast thou any here besides?*[1] that means: How canst thou yet have a mouth to intercede for the wicked? for Lot interceded all night for the townspeople that they should not be slain.

13 *For we will destroy the city.* Rabbi B'chai writes: Because the angels said, "*We* will destroy the city," and had not said, *God* will destroy the city, therefore God punished them, that they were for a hundred and thirty-eight years driven from their position, and God sent them not on any embassy (or errand) till the time of Jacob, when He sent them again to be with Jacob, and Jacob again sent them on an errand to Esau. From this it may be learnt that a man should not pride himself in his glory, for glory belongs alone to God, as the prophet Isaiah has said: "The whole earth is full of His glory."[2] In the end, however, the angels stated the case truly: "And the *Lord* hath sent us to destroy it"—the city.

14 *And Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Get ye out of the city with me, for God will destroy the city.* His sons-in-law mocked at him.[3] And when the morning star arose, then the angels hastened Lot, and said unto him, "Take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are ready with thee to be delivered, lest thou also be

[1] פֹּה By a play on the vowel points the sense of the word is altered from "*here*" to "*mouth.*" The literal meaning of מִי לְךָ פֹּה with the altered vowels would be: *Who to thee is mouth,* but the sense we give seems natural from the context.

[2] Isa. vi. 3.

[3] We give the rendering as we find it.

consumed on account of the sins of the city." And Lot lingered to save his money, but—

16 *The angels laid hold on his hand,* and on his wife and two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth from the city, but did not let him take his money with him, and therefore it is stated—

17 *When they brought them (even them) forth.* The repetition of the term "them" (in the original Hebrew),[1] shows that the angels brought *them* forth, them alone, but not their money. And the angel said: "*Look not behind thee.* Thou art delivered for the sake of Abraham's merit, therefore thou must not look to see how those other wicked are destroyed." The Midrash writes: The reason why the angel told him not to look behind was because the Shechinah with the ministering angels were standing over the city, to rain upon it brimstone and fire. But Irith, the wife of Lot, had compassion for her two daughters who were with their husbands in the city, and looking back to see whether the daughters also were coming out of the city, she meanwhile saw the Shechinah, and thus became *a heap of salt!* For having sinned in the matter of salt, refusing to give any salt to a stranger, therefore she became *a heap of salt.*

And Lot prayed unto God and said: "I cannot run quickly; I am afraid, lest the evil meets me meanwhile; let me abide in the city of Zoar. For Zoar has not long been built, and therefore it has not many sins, and there I shall remain alive." God favoured him, and left Zoar, and did not destroy it.

22 *Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither*—to Zoar. The angels were punished because they had exalted themselves, and said, "*We* will destroy" the city of Sodom; they ought to have said, "*God* will destroy;" therefore here they are obliged to say: "*"For I cannot do anything,"* which means: I cannot do anything *without* God.

[1] כהוציאם אותם, literally: "As they brought them forth, them."

23 *The sun was risen upon the earth*, and the moon was also yet visible, for it was full moon, Easter, when the sun and the moon are both visible for several hours in the morning; then God caused it to rain upon Sodom brimstone and fire out of heaven in the presence of the sun and moon, for some of the people of Sodom worshipped the sun, and some the moon. Had God punished them in the presence of the sun alone, the worshippers of the moon would have said, Had the moon been visible above the horizon she would not have permitted (such a catastrophe); and had God punished them in the presence of the moon alone, then the sun worshippers would have said, Had the sun been above the horizon, he would not have permitted (such an awful event to take place); therefore God caused it to rain brimstone and fire from heaven, in the presence of both the sun and moon. When God punishes the wicked, He sends brimstone and fire from heaven; when He does good to the righteous, He sends manna from heaven.

26 *But his wife looked back from behind him.* For Lot went last, to drive his household out of the city, and the wife of Lot looked behind him, and she became a heap of salt unto this day.

28, 29 *Abraham looked towards Sodom*, and saw a smoke went up from thence as the smoke of a lime kiln. "*God remembered Abraham*," and therefore He sent Lot away from Sodom; for God thought of the good Lot had done unto Abraham, in that he did not betray that Sarah was his wife.

30 *And Lot went up out of Zoar.* For he feared to dwell in Zoar, because it was near Sodom, and might perhaps also be destroyed. The Chizkûni writes: Lot supposed Zoar was spared because he was unable to flee further from Sodom in a *hurry*, but now, having leisure, he must move away from the city, which was doomed to destruction.

31 *And the firstborn said.* Lot had two daughters, who had had no husbands, and the elder said to the younger, "Our father is old, and may soon die, and there is no man in the world

that we should have children;" for they supposed that the whole world was destroyed, as in the time of the Deluge.

Rabbi B'chai writes: The daughters were modest, and therefore were ashamed to tell their father that the children of Noah might marry their daughters. Therefore they made him drunk with wine, that he should not know (what he was about), and God provided them with wine in the cave for that purpose.

32 *Come, let us make our father drink wine.* And because the elder began to persuade the younger to the deed, it is therefore distinctly said with reference to her, "And lay *with her father*," and with reference to the younger it is expressed more delicately, "And lay *with him*," and is not said, "with her father."

33 *And he perceived not when she lay down nor when she arose.* Yet the second night he again got drunk, and the two daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.

37 *And the elder bare a son, and called his name, Moab;* this means, he was born of my father; and because she did not say this with modesty, therefore God said unto Moses: "Do thou not war with Moab; but other distresses will be brought upon them."[1] But the younger spake with decorum, and called her son Ben-ammi, which means, he was born of *my people*, and said not distinctly (as her elder sister said) *of my father;* therefore God said unto Moses: "Thou shalt do no manner of evil to the nation of Ammon."[2]

CHAPTER XX.—1 *And Abraham journeyed thence.* Abraham saw that Sodom was destroyed and that no strangers were coming, so he journeyed thence, and came to sojourn in the city of Gerar.

[1] See Deut ii. 9, and read the note which follows next here below.

[2] The passage here quoted as from the Bible runs thus:—

דוא זאלשם דיא אומה פון עמון קיין שום בייז נים טאן: *i.e.* "Thou shalt do no manner of evil to the nation of Ammon." There is no such passage to be found anwhere in the Bible. But an occasional misquotation, from a Jewish point of view, does no more harm than an occasional deliberate falsehood. See Note, p. 106, *ante*.

2 *And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister.* The question here is: Why did not Abraham now also request Sarah to say that she was his sister, as in the case of Pharaoh? The answer is: Because Sarah having been once taken to Pharaoh, therefore Abraham knew for certain that she (without being requested to do so) would say that she was his sister.

Rabbi B'chai asks: Why did Abraham go to Gerar, since he already had had great troubles (in a royal city); his wife Sarah was taken from him, and God was obliged to do great miracles ere he took Sarah out of Pharaoh's house? The answer is: Abraham gave her a divorce (previous to going to Gerar). But God said: "Because he divorced her *out of fear*, the divorce is no divorce," and therefore came an angel to Abimelech and informed him, "*She is a man's wife.*" The woman Sarah has a husband, for her divorce is no divorce, because it was given *out of fear.*

*And Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.* And an angel came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Thou shalt die because of the woman which thou hast taken, for she has a husband."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why does it say of Pharaoh, "And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house," and of Abimelech it says, "And took Sarah," and does not say, "*Into his house*"? The answer is: Pharaoh was a greater king than Abimelech and took Sarah on account of her great beauty. He intended to make a great wedding feast before he married her, and wanted (meanwhile) to make a show of his great wealth; therefore he placed her in the house of a great prince. It states "Pharaoh's house," that is to say *the household* of Pharaoh, this means, his royal princes. But Abimelech was a righteous man, and not so rich as Pharaoh. He took Sarah because she was honourably connected, as it is said in the text: "And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, she is *my* sister," and *therefore*, "Abimelech sent and took Sarah," but he took her not on account of her beauty, for she was now not

so handsome as in the time of Pharaoh, because she was *older*, and Abimelech did not wish to make a great wedding feast, and therefore he took her at once to be his wife.

4 *And Abimelech did not come near her.* The angel prevented Abimelech coming near her. Of Pharaoh there was no need to state that he "*did not come near her*," because she was not yet in *his* house, for she was in the house of a prince.

Yet another question is asked by the Toldoth Yitzkhac: Why did an angel come to Abimelech and not to Pharaoh? The answer is: Because Abimelech was a righteous man (and Pharaoh was not).

Another question he asks: Why God plagued Pharaoh with leprosy, and not Abimelech? The answer is: God did everything, that Abimelech should (of himself) understand that it was because he took Sarah, and that alone was sufficient punishment for him; but Pharaoh having given cause that people should speak evil of Sarah, that Pharaoh lay with her, therefore God punished him with leprosy,—for he who speaks evil is plagued with leprosy.[1] Although Abimelech also gave cause to people to speak against Sarah, yet he was not guilty in the matter, and as soon as he became aware that Sarah had a husband, he would not touch her. But Pharaoh, although he knew that Sarah had a husband, yet he still desired to take her for his wife, and therefore God plagued him with leprosy.

And the Toldoth Yitzkhac asks yet another question: Why did not Pharaoh seek an explanation from Abraham for saying that Sarah was his sister, and Abimelech *did* seek from Abraham an explanation for having said that Sarah was his sister? It may also be asked: Why Pharaoh said to Abraham, "Behold thy wife, take her and go thy way,

[1] *Eerchin*, fol. 15B. Rish Lakish says: What does that mean which is written (Lev. xiv. 2), "This shall be the law of the leper?" המצורע. Reply: This shall be the law of מוציא שם רע, one that spreads a bad name (*i.e.* that speaks evil of another).

out of my land"; and Abimelech said to him, "Dwell in my land where it pleaseth thee?" The answer is: Pharaoh feared that Abraham would say to him, "I was afraid thou wouldst kill me, on account of my wife." Therefore Pharaoh avoided hearing a reply from Abraham, and said: "Take thy wife and get instantly out of my land," because he feared his own people, in respect to Sarah. But Abimelech was a righteous man, therefore he asked Abraham to tell him why he said that Sarah was his sister. Abraham replied to him: "Thou art a righteous man, but I was afraid of thy people. So not only here have I begun to say that Sarah was my sister, but ever since I left my father's house I have always said so." Abimelech, fearing that the angel came to destroy his land, as he did Sodom, therefore said unto Abraham, "Dwell in my land, and thou wilt deliver it." And thus says the text: "Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears, and the men were sore afraid."

*And he said, Lord, wilt Thou slay also a righteous nation?* "If so, then will I say that Thou hast done so likewise to the generation of the Deluge, and to the generation of the division of tongues."

Rabbi B'chai writes: *The nation?* "If Thou, God, wilt slay the king (who is the nation), Thou wilt through this (act) slay also the righteous Abraham, for my people will revenge themselves and slay him." And Abimelech said, "Why am I guilty?" Abraham said that she was his sister, and Sarah also had said that Abraham was her brother. "*In the integrity of my heart*," that is to say, "I had not the intention to commit sin, *and in the innocency of my hands have I done this.* I am free from the sin, for I have not yet touched her." The angel said unto him, "I know that thou hadst no intention to commit sin, therefore I have withheld thee from committing a sin, and have not permitted thee to touch her. This (affair) was not of thee." *And now,*

7 *Restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet.* "He is a prophet and knows well that thou hast not touched her, she will not be despised or rejected by him, and he will pray for thee."

The B'chai writes: Abimelech said unto Sarah, "*Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver,*" "and thus will all people know for certain that I have not touched thee, but that I was obliged to restore thee to him and to conciliate him, for till now, I did not love him, and now my giving him so much money, (people will say) this must be a miracle from God." Had he given Sarah the money, the world would have said, he gave her hire. "*Thus she was reproved.*" "Thus thou shalt be able to defend thyself, and prove to all people that thou art gone out of my house pure." Another exposition can be given to "*Thus she was reproved.*" "All people will reprove thee, as punished by God, if thou say Abraham is thy brother, and people take thee for a wife."

The Midrash Rabba writes: Abimelech gave Sarah an expensive dress, which a queen used to wear, and said unto her, "Behold, it will be for thee a covering of the eyes; all people will see the handsome dress and will fear to look on thee."

17 *So Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants, and they bare children.* Abraham prayed that Abimelech might be healed, and prayed for them also, and they all were healed.[1]

CHAPTER XXI.—1 *And the Lord visited Sarah.*[2] The Torah records the chapter of Sarah's conception close upon that

[1] See *Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, p. 336, v. 18, where it is said that even the hens belonging to the house of Abimelech ceased to lay eggs (and needed to be cured).

[2] This chapter is read with great devotion and solemnity at public worship on the first day of the Jewish new year, for it was on that day that Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah were visited or remembered by the Lord. *Kosh-hashanah*, fol. 11A. פקדונות הרי הן כזכרונות, Visitations are the same as Remembrances (Gen. xxi. 1; xxx. 22; 1 Sam. i. 19 and ii. 21; also Exod. iii. 16).

relating to Abraham's intercession on behalf of Abimelech, that (the females of) his household might bear children. Here the Torah teaches us: When one prays for his neighbour, and he himself is in need of the same thing for which he prays, God grants it first to him before He grants it to his neighbour, for Abraham prayed that the household of Abimelech might bear children, and God gave Abraham children before He gave to Abimelech, and this is the meaning of "*and the Lord visited Sarah.*" God remembered, or was mindful of Sarah's conception, *before* He healed Abimelech (and his wife and his maidservants).

The Midrash writes: What did God recall to mind about Sarah? The reply is: God said, "This Sarah was in the house of Pharaoh and in the house of Abimelech, and she came out *pure;* how shall I not remember her for good that she may have children?"

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks a question: Since it is stated, "*And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said,*" what need is there for the text to say, "*And the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken*"? The answer is: And the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken, that is to say, God caused that Sarah should not only have a son, but also an abundant supply of milk.[1]

6 *And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear me will laugh with me.* For many women visited Sarah on that day, and on that day many sick were also healed.

7 *And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?* The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: She said, who will now be able to talk with Abraham, since Sarah his wife suckles children? that is to say, he will be very proud. And therefore does the text mention of Sarah laughter or merriment, because it is more wonder for an old woman to beget children than for an old man.

[1] See *ante*, chap. xviii. 12.

8 *And the child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast.* And many princes were at the feast; also Shem, and Eber, and Abimelech, and Og (king of Bashan). People (taunted and) said to Og, "Thou hast said that Sarah would have no children!" Og (retorted and) said: "Isaac is like a fly! If I were to lay my little finger on him, it would kill him." But God said, "His children will be as the sand at the sea (shore), and thou shalt fall into their hands."[1]

*The day that Isaac was weaned.* When Isaac was weaned Abraham made a feast—a banquet. The Rabbi B'chai writes: Why made Abraham no feast when he circumcised his son? The answer is: He waited till he was weaned, for he wished to rejoice together with his son in the joy of the Torah (Law). It is also well-known that a man loves his children better when they are weaned than when they were born, for they are now (somewhat) sensible, and can (in a manner) talk. Therefore he made a feast when Isaac was weaned.

The Midrash writes: *In the day* ("hag-mal") *he was weaned,* are (in Hebrew) two words "*hag*," and "*mal*;" the numerical value of "*hag*" is eight, that is to say, at eight days "*mal*," *i.e.* he circumcised him, when he made a feast.[2] From this we learn that we make a feast at a circumcision.

9, 10 *And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out the bondwoman and her son.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Ishmael mocked at the feast Abraham had made for Isaac, and said, "Why is the merriment so great? a feast is made for Isaac more than for me! Yet I am the first-

[1] Moses killed Og. *Tal. Misc.*, p. 41, 7.

[2] הֹגָמַל, *i.e.* he was weaned: divide the Hebrew word into two, הג and מל, the first has the numerical value of 8, and the second signifies "he was circumcised." The wit and wisdom of this kind of trifling with Scripture is much admired and lauded by the orthodox Jews, and hence the very great number of Midrashim or witty (?) commentaries on the Scripture.

born, and will inherit *a double share.*" Therefore said Sarah, "*Cast out this bondwoman and her son*, for that son shall not inherit with my son Isaac."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks also the question: Is it proper and suitable for a master, as Abraham was, to give only "bread and a bottle of water"? The answer is: God said unto Abraham—

12 *In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice.* And Sarah said she should be *cast out*, therefore Abraham had not the power to give her more than what is usually given to one *cast out*, bread and water only. And God said unto Abraham—

13 *And also of the son of bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.* I will make also Ishmael a nation, for he is thy child.

14 *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder.* And the lad also he put on her shoulder, for he was ill and could not walk. And the Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Ishmael was wild and would not obey his father and leave his house, therefore Abraham was obliged to bind him and put him on the shoulder of Hagar; and therefore it is not said (in the text), and he sent *them* away, but "and he sent *her* away," because Ishmael was bound upon her shoulder, and as she was sent away, Ishmael was sent away also.

15 *And the water was spent from the bottle.* For Ishmael wa sick, and a sick person drinks more than one in health. Then Hagar cast him away under a tree, and she sat down at a distance from him, so far as one can shoot with a bow, for she thought, "Let me not see how the lad dies." And she lifted up her voice and wept.

17 *And God heard the voice of the lad.* And God listened to the voice and to the prayer of the lad. Our sages learn from this, that the prayer of the sick is better accepted than the prayer offered by others on his behalf.

*And the angel said unto Hagar, Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.* For the angels said before God, "Lord of the Universe! How wilt Thou have compassion on Ishmael, who will eventually kill the Israelites by thirst?"[1] But God replied: "I judge no man more than *where he is, i.e.* only as he is now, and not as he will be *hereafter;* and now as he is, Ishmael does not deserve to die of thirst." And the angel said unto Hagar, "Take up the lad,"

18 *For I will make of him a great nation.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: What need had the angel to talk so much with Hagar, that the lad would be a great nation? Better if God had shown her a well of water, as she would have surely given the lad to drink. The answer is: Hagar intended to let Ishmael die, for she said, "His father Abraham has no compassion on him, why should I have compassion on him?" And in anger she cast him away under a tree, for it is said, "And she *cast* the child," and it is not said she *laid* the child down; so the angel thought that she would let him die, and therefore said the angel unto Hagar, "The child will be a great nation, therefore take him up and give him to drink, for where thou standest is a well of water."

19-21 *And she filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad to drink.* And God was with the lad and helped him. And his mother took him to Egypt.

22 *And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech said:* "Abraham has great good fortune; he was delivered from Sodom and the great kings, and Sarah his wife bare to him a child in her old age." Thus Abimelech being afraid of Abraham, said unto him—

23 *Swear unto me,* that thou wilt do no evil to my children, "but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee." And Abraham swore unto Abimelech. The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Abimelech had an idol, and he wished that Abraham

[1] See Isa. xxi. 13, 14, and a Midrash says they brought to the Israelites salted food, and skin bottles filled with *air*, but no water.

should swear by it; but Abraham said, "I will not swear by thine idol, but I will swear by 'I am the Lord thy God.'"[1]

33 *And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba.* Abraham planted a pretty garden with all kinds of good fruits to give to stranger-guests. But the sages say: "Grove" (*Eshel* in Hebrew) means an inn, or a house for strangers, a guest-house. Abraham built a guest-house with four doors, in order that strangers should be able to enter from all points. By means of this house God's name was magnified; for the strangers, after being refreshed, desired to praise Abraham, but Abraham said, "Ye think ye have eaten of *mine. No!* for the eating and drinking belongeth unto God, therefore praise God!" This is it that the text says:

*And called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.* The Rabbi B'chai writes: The house (for strangers) was called *Eshel* because its letters were the initials of words, which severally mean board, lodging, and accompanying.[2] And Abraham repeated before each stranger that God is *a unity* in the universe.

CHAPTER XXII.[3]—1 *And it came to pass after these*

[1] Exod. xx. 2. This form of oath only is most binding. Vide *Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, 106, 19, and notes. An oath which a Jew usually is made to take in a Christian court, has no binding force whatever on him.

[2] אשל, Eshel: אכילה Board; שכיבה Lodging; לויה Accompanying the stranger on leaving the hospitable Eshel. Vide *Tal. Misc.*, 319, 2; subject *Notricon.*

[3] This chapter (1–19) is read with the greatest possible solemnity out of *the Scroll of the Law* at public worship, on the second day of the Jewish New Year. And also, but with less ceremonious solemnity, every day *all the year round,* Sabbath days and Feast days not excepted, for it is embodied in the Jewish Liturgy and forms part of the daily Morning Prayer.

This portion of Scripture is well known in Jewry by the title of עקדת יצחק, Akeedath Yitzkhac, *i.e.* "*The Binding of Isaac,*" and the great benefits derived from the mere daily repetition of the same are fully described in the *Holy Zohar* and many other standard works. Every Jew who daily repeats "*The Binding of Isaac*" is assured of being protected against all evil diseases, for, says the *Holy Zohar*, קלא נפיק ואמר אל תעש לו

*words*[1] *that God tempted Abraham.* For Satan said before God: "Abraham made a great banquet, but brought Thee no sacrifice whatever." God replied, "Abraham only made the banquet for the sake of his son, and if I bid him to slaughter his son for My sake, he will certainly do it." This then is the meaning of "*after these words*," after the words of Satan, God said unto Abraham, "For My sake slay thy son Isaac."

Another explanation is: "*After these words*," after the taunting words uttered by Ishmael to Isaac. "My father," said he, "circumcised me at the age of thirteen, and I resisted not (but resigned myself to the Divine command); but thee, Isaac, he circumcised at eight days old, when thou didst not understand to resist." Isaac retorted, "Thou boastest against me with the (sacrifice of) one member of thy body; but if God would have my *whole* body, I would certainly surrender it." "*After these words*" God said unto Abraham—

2 *Take now thy son I pray thee.*[2] "I pray thee to obey Me now in order that people should not say that thy previous trials (of faith and obedience) were nothing, and take thy son and slaughter him for a sacrifice for My sake (in proof of thy obedience to Me)." But Abraham said: "I have two sons, which should I take?" God said: "*Thine only son.*" Abraham said: "Isaac is an only son of Sarah, and Ishmael is an only son of

מאומה "A voice (from heaven) goes forth and says: 'Neither do thou anything unto him'" (ver. 12).

This, perhaps, is one of the advantages the Jews have over the Gentiles; they repeat daily "the Akeedath Yitzkhac," and therefore enjoy better health (or fancy they do), and consequently live longer; and by the mere daily repetition of the 145th Psalm they are assured to live for ever in the world to come. *Tal. Misc.*, 36, 3.

A long life here, and a happy eternity hereafter, may well inspire every Israelite to thank God every morning שלא עשני גוי, *i.e.* "*that Thou hast not made me a Gentile.*"

[1] דָּבָר means both a thing and a word. The Commentator follows the exegesis of the Talmud, and we must give the rendering of the Commentator.

[2] נָא קח literally: "Take, I pray thee."

Hagar." "*Whom thou lovest*," said God. "I love them both," said Abraham. God did not at once tell him to take Isaac, in order not to frighten him, as also to reward him for each word he spoke with Him.

*And offer him there for a burnt offering.* There, on Mount Moriah. God did not say that he should slay him, but that he should bring him up and bring him down again. But Abraham thought that God ordered him there to *sacrifice* Isaac for a burnt offering.

3 *And Abraham rose up early in the morning*, to do the bidding of God, and he himself saddled his ass; and he took with him his two young men, Ishmael and Eliezer.

*And clave the wood for a burnt offering.* He split the wood at home, thinking, perhaps there may be no wood there; and he carried the wood with him three days' journey.

Rabbi B'chai offers another explanation why Abraham took the wood from his own house: viz. to be sure that the wood was not attacked by insects, and that it was (Kosher) clean for use at the offering of a sacrifice. For the merit of his splitting the wood, God split (divided) the Red Sea for his children.

4 *And he saw the place afar off.* Abraham said to Isaac, "What seest thou?" Isaac replied, "I see a pretty mount, and on it a pretty cloud." Abraham asked the young men, "What do ye see?" They said "We see nothing." Then said Abraham

5 *Abide ye here with the ass.* The Pirké d'Rabbi Eleazar writes: The young men quarrelled together. Ishmael said, "Isaac will be slaughtered, and I shall inherit all." And Eliezer said, "Thou hast been driven away from thy father's house, therefore *thou* shalt not inherit, but *I* shall." Then a Bath Kol (a voice from heaven) came forth and said, "Neither of you shall inherit."

The Midrash writes: Abraham thought, "If I do not tell Sarah of my intended offering up of Isaac, when she (on my return) does not see him, she will die; if I do tell her before-

hand, she will not consent." Therefore Abraham told Sarah to prepare a dinner for merriment. "For," said he, "I knew God when I was three years old, and our son Isaac is now thirty-seven years old, I must therefore initiate him to perform the precepts. I intend going to offer a sacrifice on Mount Moriah; let him go with me." Sarah gave permission to take Isaac with him, and Abraham rose very early in order that she should not repent; also when all people were yet asleep, in order that they should not dissuade him from offering up his son Isaac.

Then Satan disguised himself as an old man, and presented himself before Abraham, and said, "Where art thou going?" "I am going to pray," replied Abraham. (Satan) "What is the use of the wood, and the fire, and the slaughtering knife?" (Abraham) "I shall remain some days, and the wood and fire will be for cooking purposes." (Satan) "Such an old man as thou art, who hast no more than an only son in thine old age, and wilt thou slay him? Will God not punish thee?" (Abraham) "*God* told me to do so."

Then came Satan unto Isaac, and asked him, "Where art thou going?" Isaac replied, "I am going to learn to do the commandments." Satan said unto him, "Wilt thou be taught after death, or when alive? for thou art to be slaughtered!" Isaac replied, "If God wills that I should be slaughtered, I will let it be so without resisting.

Satan then went to Sarah, and said unto her, "Where is Abraham (gone) with Isaac? Thou shalt never more see thy son Isaac." Sarah replied, "Let God do what He wills!"

The Midrash writes also: That Satan made a great (flood of) water, which reached up to the necks of Abraham and Isaac. But Abraham prayed unto God, and said, "Lord of the Universe! Thou hast bidden me to offer up my son Isaac for a sacrifice unto Thee, therefore help me now to do so." Then the flood of water disappeared.[1]

[1] Comp. Rev. xii. 15, 16. The Talmud and the Midrashim have bor-

*And we shall come again unto you.* Abraham told the young men, we will go to yonder place, and we shall return unto you. Rashi writes: He said this prophetically, that they *both* would return. Rabbi B'chai writes: Abraham had it in his mind that he would return the bones of Isaac after they had been burnt on the altar, therefore he said (the truth) *we both* will return.[1]

6 *And they went both of them together.* Both of them together were equally happy as they went; Abraham, who knew that he was going to slaughter Isaac, was as happy as Isaac, who knew nothing about it as yet.

7 *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father.* It may be asked: What need is there for the text to state that Isaac spake unto Abraham his *father*, since we know it already that Abraham *was* his father; and again, "*And said my father*:" what need had he to say that he was his father? Rabbi B'chai writes: He therefore called him *twice*, father, father, in order that he might have compassion on him, as a father (pitieth) his son.

*And he said, . . . My son.* Abraham responded, "Thou art my son." Isaac then asked, "If I am indeed thy son, where is the sacrifice?"

8 *And Abraham replied, God will show us the sacrifice, my son.* Isaac then understood that he himself was to be offered for a sacrifice, and therefore says the text once more—

*They went both of them together.* That is to say, although Isaac knew now that he was to be offered as a sacrifice, yet they went both of them together, of one heart and mind, and equally happy (to slay and to be slain).

rowed many sentiments from the New Testament. See Index III. to *Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, under the word *New Test.*

[1] In this case a little prevarication and mental reservation was necessary. Father Abraham thus established a precedent for the conduct of his orthodox children. So at least would reason a modern Jew. R. Akiva swore with his lips and made it null in his heart! The Talmud says plainly that thoughts of the heart are not words of the mouth: דברים שבלב אינן דברים. *Kiddushin*, fol. 50A.

Rabbi B'chai asks: Who had the greater merit? Abraham, who was about to slay his own son with his own hands, or Isaac, who was willing to be slain? Some of the sages say: Abraham had the greater merit, for it is much easier for a man to allow himself to be slain, than for a father to slay his son with his own hands. But some of the sages say: The merit of Isaac was greater, because Abraham explicitly heard direct from God that he was to slaughter his son, whereas Isaac had no such Divine communication, he having heard from Abraham only, and yet was ready to be slain. Therefore his merit was greater. The Rabbi B'chai maintains, however, that the merit of Abraham was greater, for Isaac was in duty bound to obey his father's bidding.

9 *And Abraham built an altar there.* "*There*,"—on the same spot where Adam the first had built an altar. The Chizkûni asks: Why did not Isaac assist building the altar? The answer is: Abraham hid Isaac away, that Satan should not blemish him, and thus disqualify him from being an acceptable sacrifice.[1] Therefore Isaac was unable to assist in building.

*And bound Isaac his son.* Isaac said to Abraham, "Bind my hands and feet, that I should not be able to throw myself about when thou slayest me, and thus make the slaughtering illegal." Abraham bound him, and laid him on the wood, and took the knife to slay him. As soon as the knife touched Isaac's throat his soul departed out of him. When he heard the voice from the throne of glory, that Isaac should not be touched, his soul returned into his body, and Abraham unbound him and pronounced the (following) blessing: "Blessed art thou, O Lord! who revivest the dead."[2]

[1] Vide Lev. xxii. 18–25.

[2] This blessing is one of the eighteen blessings *thrice* repeated daily by every Jew in his morning or evening worship in synagogue or at home. Strange to say, this blessing has been omitted in a copy before *us* of the English translation of the Morning Service, in the English, but not in the Hebrew. This copy of the Liturgy was published in London in 1848, by H. Abrahams, and revised by Isaac L. Lyon. See said Liturgy, p. 31.

The Chizkûni and the Imrae Noam ask: What need had God to try Abraham, since He well knew that he would obey all he was bid to do? The answer is: The angel said unto God, "In what is Abraham so much better than other righteous men, that Thou shouldest do so many wonders for him?" God replied, "I will show you what Abraham is; if I tell him *to slay his son*, he will *obey*.

*And bound Isaac his son.* Abraham having bound Isaac's hands and feet, and laid him upon the wood, Isaac besought him thus: "Father, let me not see the knife, lest I shake with fear, and thou shouldest not legally (Kosher) slay me." He also begged his father not to tell Sarah (what had happened) when on the housetop, or by the side of a pit, for she might be frightened and fall down.

And Abraham took the knife in his hand to slay his son, but a voice from heaven cried aloud, "Touch not Isaac to kill him!" Abraham said, "Let me shed a little of his blood." But the angel replied:

*Neither do thou anything to him.* Make no blemish in him. The B'chai writes: Abraham asked the voice that cried aloud, "Who art thou?" And the voice answered, "I am an angel." Abraham then said, "God Himself spoke with me to slay my son, and now (if I am not to slay him) let Him speak also Himself with me."

15 *And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,*

16 *By Myself have I sworn.* The angel told him that God swore by Himself that He would bless the children of Isaac, and multiply them as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. And Abraham said unto God, "Let me say my say before Thee. First, Thou hast told me that my principal children would be of *Isaac*; then Thou commandedst me to slay him; and now again Thou biddest me not to slay him." God replied, "I do not go from My word. I only told thee *to bring* thy son for a burnt offering, but I

have not bid *to slay* him. Now as thou hast brought him *up*, thou mayest bring him *down*." Abraham said unto God, "Thou hast sworn, and I, too, swear, that I will not go down from here till Thou hast promised me that Thou wilt remember this (binding of Isaac) as an atonement for the sins of my children, as if I actually had poured out *the blood*[1] *of my son*, and as if his ashes were actually spread upon the altar.

The Imrae Noam asks: Why is it stated that the angel called unto Abraham from heaven, without his coming down to him, whereas to Hagar the angel came down from heaven and found her at the well? The answer is: The angel was obliged *promptly* to call unto Abraham, for he was in a hurry to slay his son. (There was no time for delay.)

*For now I know that thou fearest God.* God said unto Abraham, "Now I can answer the angels why I show thee more favour than to other people."

13 *And he looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.* The ram could not escape, and from the six days of the creation he had been prepared for this purpose (to be caught by the horns, and to be a substitute for Isaac). The Chizkûni writes: Because the ram was tied, Abraham therefore understood that God provided it for a sacrifice in place of his son. Had the ram not been tied, Abraham would have thought that it belonged to another person, and would not have taken it for a sacrifice.

The B'chai writes on the words[2] "*Another caught in a thicket*" thus: When Israel are unclean with sin all the year round, they blow the horn of a ram on new year, and God forgives them their sins.

[1] This sentiment seems to be based on *Yoma*, fol. 5A, where it is said, אין כפרה אלא בדם, *i.e.* There is no atonement except by blood; or, in the language of the New Test. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. ix. 22.

[2] The words of the A. V. "*behind him*," will bear also the meaning "another," אחר means "behind," as well as "another."

23 *And Bethuel begat Rebekah.* After the binding of Isaac was over, Abraham thought that had Isaac been slain, he would have departed from this world without children, and it would have been better if he had given him a wife of the daughters of Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Therefore God communicated to him the good tidings that his brother's son had begat a daughter, named Rebekah, who should be Isaac's wife.

END OF THE FOURTH SECTION.

CHAPTER XXIII.—1 *And the life of Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years.* The sages say that during all the time that Sarah lived, the candle burned (continually) from Sabbath-eve to Sabbath-eve, a blessing was in her dough, and a cloud stood over her tent. As soon as she died and these three things ceased to be, then it was known that it was for her sake that they had been. She was worthy of dying in the Land of Israel, and being buried there. She lived out her days, and this is why the text says: "And the life of Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years, the years of the life of Sarah," that is to say, she lived out (the appointed number of) her years.

2 *And Sarah died.* The Torah must needs write the chapter of Sarah's death immediately after the record of "The Binding of Isaac," because on account of "The Binding," when she heard that her son was bound to be slaughtered, she was so frightened that her soul came out (she died). And why does the Torah record first the birth of Rebekah, and then the death of Sarah? This is to show us that before one saint departs from this world another saint enters into it.[1]

The Chizkûni writes: Sarah had no need to adorn herself

[1] The Talmud proves that no righteous man departs this life before another equally righteous is born (from Eccles. i. 5): "The sun rises and the sun goes down." The sun of Eli had not set before that of Samuel rose; as it is said (1 Sam. iii. 3), "Ere the lamp of God was out . . . and Samuel lay down." *Kiddushim*, fol. 72B.

with paint (kohl) or other ornaments, as other women adorn themselves; for she was as handsome, without any ornaments, as a young girl.[1]

Rabbi B'chai and the Chizkûni write on the text, "And the life of Sarah *were*" (plur.): *Were* (in the original[2]) has the numerical value of thirty-seven, to show that the real life of Sarah was thirty-seven years, viz. from the birth of Isaac to the Binding of Isaac, when he was thirty-seven years old; for all the years of her life *before* the birth of Isaac could not be called life, because if one has no children, one is like being dead.[3]

The Baal Hatturim writes on "Kirjath-arba," thus: Sarah died in the city of Kirjath-arba, and the city was so called because four couples were buried there, viz. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Another explanation is, that the city was called Kirjath-Arba because four mighty giants were there.

*And Abraham came (from Beersheba) to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.* Rabbi B'chai asks: What need is there to say, "to mourn for *Sarah*," since her name was mentioned just before, "and *Sarah* died"? The reply is: When mourning is made over the dead, the name ought to be mentioned several times.

Another question is asked by Rabbi B'chai: Why is it stated only that Abraham mourned, and not that Isaac mourned for his mother? The answer is: Isaac was not informed of the death of his mother Sarah, in order that he should not distress himself about her dying on his account when she heard that he was bound to be slaughtered.

[1] We are told in *Meggillah*, fol. 15A: There were four beautiful women in the world—Sarah, Abigail, Rahab and Esther. In *Bava-Bathra*, fol. 50A, we are informed, compared to Sarah, all other women were like *apes*.

[2] ויהיו = 37.

[3] Four classes of people are like the dead: the poor, the lepers, the blind, and the childless. *Nedarim*, fol. 64B.

Isaac is not mentioned at the mourning and burial of Sarah, nor since "The Binding," for he was three years on Mount Moriah, till he became forty years of age, when he married Rebekah, therefore it is said "*Abraham* returned unto his young men."[1] Abraham *alone* returned, but Isaac remained on Mount Moriah.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why did not Abraham betimes buy a city where to bury himself and wife, since they were already old? The answer is: Abraham did so wisely (in delaying to buy). He thought (to himself): "I know that Adam and Eve are buried in the cave, and the place therefore is very valuable. Ephron may not know that Adam and Eve are buried there, and therefore he holds the cave of no value. If I make him an offer to buy it before Sarah dies, he (Ephron) may suspect something, and will be making inquiries of people about it, and will learn that Adam and Eve are buried there, and consequently he will ask a high price for it." Therefore when Sarah became very old, Abraham sent her to Hebron, where she would eventually die, and where there was the cave of Adam and Eve, and when Sarah died there (thought Abraham), I shall get the cave of Ephron with ease, in spite of the inquiries that may be made. Therefore Abraham behaved wisely in not saying plainly that he wanted that particular cave, but simply said: "Give me a place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight," that is to say: A dead person lies before me, and ye therefore ought to give me a grave for the dead. They answered him: "In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead," since the dead person lies before thee.

*And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Is it not customary to weep first and then to mourn? The answer is: Abraham was very joyful because Isaac had been delivered from "The Binding" (*i.e.* from being offered as a sacrifice), and also because he heard the

[1] Chap. xxii. 19.

good tidings that Rebekah was born, as his son Isaac would then be able to have a wife of honourable connection, therefore he could not weep, for great joy, and hence he first mourned for her and recounted her good works, and afterwards he was able also to weep a little. And this is the reason why the word "weep" is written with a small Caph,[1] because he only wept a little for her, for he was full of joy and unable to weep much.

The Baal Hatturim writes: He wept but little for her, because she was old when she died, and people weep little for an aged person. Another explanation is: He wept little for Sarah because she herself caused her own death when she passed judgment on Abraham by saying: "The Lord judge between me and thee."[2] And he who causes his own death need not be wept for.

3 *And Abraham stood up before his dead*, and prayed the children of Heth they should give him a sepulchre. The Baal Hatturim writes: It is not lawful to talk in the presence of the dead, for it is a contempt for the dead who cannot speak. Therefore Abraham arose from before the dead and went aside, and spoke to the children of Heth, saying—

4 *I am a stranger*, from a strange land, and I have settled myself among you. Another explanation is: He spoke thus: "If ye will sell me a sepulchre, well and good, I shall count myself for a stranger and buy it of you; but if ye will not sell, then I am one *settled* in the land, and will by law take away for myself a place for a sepulchre, for God has promised *to give* me this land."

The Chizkûni asks: Why has the Torah recorded in what city Sarah died, but it does not record in what city Abraham, and Rebekah, and Rachel, and Leah have died? The answer is: Abraham sent Sarah to Hebron, in order that she should

[1] ולבכתה. The type of the letter Caph in this word is much smaller than the other letters.

[2] Chap. xvi. 5.

be far from Mount Moriah, and should not soon learn that her son Isaac was slain. But as the angel Sammael came to Sarah and told her that Isaac was slain, her soul departed, and she died.

Some say, Sarah was ill, and Abraham sent her to Hebron because of the good air there, but when there she died on account of what she heard about her son Isaac.

*Give me a possession of a burying-place with you.* The B'chai asks: What need had he to say "*with you*"? The answer is: Their arrangement was that each family had its own particular cemetery, and when a stranger died they buried him separately in a field. "Therefore," said Abraham, "give me a place for a cemetery with you."

6 *Thou art a mighty prince among us.* The children of Heth said unto Abraham, "Do not hold thyself for so little—for a stranger—thou art a Divine personage among us; choose, therefore, the best of our sepulchres to bury thy dead, none of us shall withhold from thee (his sepulchre) from burying thy dead." Abraham said to the children of Heth, "If ye indeed wish that I should bury my dead,"

8, 9 *Hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he give me the cave of Machpelah, which he has.* The cave was called Machpelah because it was *double*, one cave over the other. Another explanation why the cave was called Machpelah (*i.e.* double) is, because of the couples buried there, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Another explanation is, that the cave was called *double* (Machpelah), because the length of Adam was in the cave doubled up in two.

Abraham said, "I will give good silver for the cave." Ephron replied, "A land which is worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee, between such good friends as we are? Bury, therefore, thy dead."

16 *And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver*, which Ephron named, for Ephron said at first, that he would make Abraham

a present of the field, but afterwards he would accept only *heavy weight*, such as would pass among *all* merchants.

CHAPTER XXIV.—1 *And Abraham was old and well stricken in age.* When Abraham became old, *then* he was well stricken in age; for there are many people who become grey, and get white hair, on account of affliction and not on account of old age, but Abraham possessed wealth and honour, and had a son in his old age, therefore he was well-stricken in age, not on account of affliction, but on account of many years.

Because he was very old, he thought he might die before taking a wife for his son Isaac. He therefore made his servant swear that he would take no wife for his son Isaac except from his own family. And why did he not make his son Isaac himself swear (to that effect)? Because he thought to himself: "Perhaps the servant is a cheat, and would persuade Isaac to take a wife from (the daughters of) the Canaanites;" and therefore he made the servant himself swear. The Midrash writes: On account of four things a man soon becomes grey and old:— 1. When one is frightened (suddenly), old age comes upon him; 2. when one has bad children; 3. when one goes to war; and 4. when he has a bad wife.

*And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.* He wanted nothing, except a wife for his son, which he much wished.

Rabbi Meir says: God had blessed Abraham in *not* giving him a daughter, for he would not have been able to give her a good husband, and she would have been obliged to marry an idolater, and every wife is in the power of her husband; if he worships idols she must do the same. Rabbi Yehudah says: Abraham had a daughter, for a man desires to have both sons and daughters, especially when he is rich.[1]

[1] In *Bava-Bathra*, fol. 141A, we read: "And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." Rabbi Meir, said; He had no daughter. Rabbi Yehudah said; He had a daughter and her name was Baccol (בכל). The Comment of Tosephoth *in loco* says: He had a daughter, and her name

2 *His eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all he had.* Eliezer was the chief in the house of Abraham.

The Chizkûni writes: Abraham sent Eliezer in preference to any other servant to take a wife for his son Isaac, because Eliezer was older than any other of all his servants, and an old man is more to be trusted than a young man; and therefore says the text, his *oldest* servant. Nevertheless they still suspected him, as we shall see further on.

2, 3 *Put I pray thee thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.* Rabbi B'chai, and the Toldoth Yitzkhac, and the Chizkûni write: It was a custom in ancient times that a servant put his hand under his master's thigh as a proof of subjection and faithfulness.

Rashi writes: He who swears must hold in his hand a *book* or something else that is *sacred.* As Abraham had no *book*, he ordered his servant to put his hand under his thigh, because it was the first precept to Abraham which came through much pain.

*And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth.* Rashi asks: Why is it that in verse 7 is mentioned only, "The Lord God of heaven which took me from my father's house," and not as here, "the God of the earth"? The answer is: When God first led Abraham from the house of Terah, He was not known then as a God of the earth, but only as a God of heaven; but when Abraham came he made it known that God was a God of heaven and of the earth.

*That thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters*

was Baccol. If it is asked why he did not give her to Isaac, for a son of Noah might legally marry his sister? It could be replied: Perhaps she was *too* young, and he would not yet marry her to Isaac; or, because she was from Hagar and not from Sarah, and therefore he would not marry her to Isaac.

*of the Canaanites.* This passage teaches us that a man should take a wife of his own family, as Amram did in taking Jochebed [1] and as Abraham did in taking a wife for his son Isaac from his own family; for when one marries into his own family there is *peace* between them, for one cannot taunt the other, "Thou art not so well connected as I am."

The Eben Shoaeb asks a question: Why did Abraham take a maidservant, and have a concubine, but Isaac did not? Because Isaac was consecrated as a Corban (offering) on Mount Moriah, therefore he could not (be so profane as to) marry a maidservant; but Abraham was not consecrated, and he could marry a maidservant; and this is why Abraham would not trouble God with his prayer on behalf of his wife Sarah, that she should have children, for the saints do not like to weary God with their prayers about things that are not very urgent.[2] But Isaac was obliged to pray on behalf of his wife Rebekah, that she should have children, because he could not marry a maidservant (with the view of having children by her), for he was *very holy.*

The Eben Shoaeb asks another question: Why did not Abraham ask Isaac whether he should send for a wife for him? The answer is: Because Abraham knew (for certain) that Isaac would obey him. Another answer he gives: At that time Isaac was not with Abraham, for he was in the garden of Eden for three years to cure himself of the wound Abraham had made in his throat when he was about to slay him.

The Chizkûni writes: The reason why Abraham did not wish that his son should marry a wife of the Canaanites is, that the Canaanites should not afterwards say, "God would not perform His oath to give the land to Abraham's children, who were obliged to effect a matrimonial alliance with us by which they would obtain the land." Therefore Abraham prohibited his servant to take a wife unto his son Isaac of the daughters

[1] Exod. vi. 20. [2] Vide Isa. i. 14, 15.

of Canaan. "For I know," said he, "that God will give the land of Canaan unto my children without their daughters."

5 *And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land.* And Abraham said unto Eliezer, "If the woman will not be willing to follow thee hither, then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, and thou mayest take a wife unto my son from the daughters of my companions, Aner, Eschol, and Mamre.[1] And Abraham prayed and said:

7 *The Lord God of heaven which took me from my father's house,* and from the land of my nativity, which is Ur of the Chaldees, may He send an angel before thee that thou shalt take a wife unto my son Isaac from thence.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: What need had Abraham to mention in his prayer that God took him from his father's house and from his native land? The reply is: Abraham said in his prayer: "Thou, O God, hast led me from my father's house, and from my native land, how can I now take a wife from my own family? Therefore it is but *right* that Thou shouldest send an angel with Eliezer, that he should be able to take a wife unto my son from my family, because I have kept Thy command and came away from it."

10 *And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; and all the goods of his master were in his hands.* Abraham's camels were distinguished from all other camels because they were always muzzled, that they should not be able to feed on fields belonging to other people. And Eliezer had a legal document in his hands in which all the property of Abraham was made over to Isaac as a specific gift, in order that they should be induced to send their daughter when they saw that Isaac was so very rich.[2]

11 *And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by*

[1] Chap. xiv. 13.

[2] This explains the phrase, which would otherwise be unintelligible, "All the goods of his master were in his hand."

*a well of water.* Eliezer came to the city of Nahor, and by the well there he made the camels to kneel to give them to drink. This was towards the evening, when the maidens went out to draw water. And Eliezer prayed, and said:

12 *O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day,* that the maiden should come to the well amongst other maidens, and

14 *The damsel to whom I shall say, Give me to drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also, let the same be she whom Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac.* That is to say, "Because the maiden will be kind at the well, it will be a proof that she is worthy to be Isaac's wife, and will come to the house of Abraham, where kindness is shown to people."

*And thereby shall I know that Thou hast showed kindness unto my master.* That is to say, "Thou, God, shouldest so order that a maiden of my master's family should tell me so."

The Chizkûni asks: Why did Eliezer wish to know of the maiden at the well, whether she were kind to people; he might have learned at her father's house whether she were pious and prudent? The answer is: A child cannot be so well known in the house of its parents whether it be wise; for it may be foolish, but its parents teach it on the sly to appear wise in the presence of a stranger. Therefore did Eliezer wish to know her at the well, where she would be alone, and learn from herself her wisdom. The Chizkûni writes also: Eliezer took *ten* camels with him, in order to have ten people to ride on them, that he might have a *Minyan*[1] (a congregation of no less than ten, necessary) for the blessing of the solemnization of matrimony.

15 *And it came to pass before he had done speaking,* that Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel came with her pitcher upon her shoulder. The B'chai asks: What need had the text to say, "And it came to pass, he"? it need only say, "And it came

[1] See *Tal. Misc.*, 128, 1, Note; and 134, 12, Note.

to pass, before he had done speaking."[1] The answer is: The word "*He*" refers to God, who is called *He*, as it is said, "It is *He* that hath made us."[2] This is to say, God sent an angel with Eliezer, and he caused Rebekah to come soon to the well.

16 *And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: The text teaches us that God had accepted the prayer of Eliezer, and caused such a damsel to come to the well that never came there before for fear of young men, and not only that she never went to the well, but even in her house also no one could see her, because she was exceedingly modest, and this is why the text says no man had known her. * * * *

*And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.* It is not said: "And she drew" (the water), but only "and filled." From this have our sages inferred, that the water had risen towards Rebekah, so that she had no need to

[1] In the original the *literal* rendering would run thus: "And it came to pass, he, before he had done speaking."

[2] Ps. c. 3. הוא עשנו. Here Rabbi B'chai lays stress on the personal pronoun *He* (*Hû* in Hebrew), and converts it into a proper name for God. The Talmud itself, and Rashi the first Talmudic commentator, and also the orthodox Liturgy, take the same view, viz. that *He* (i.e. *Hû*) is the Name of God. By Kabbalistic combination the ineffable Name יהוה, Jehovah, expresses a Duality in the Godhead—a He and a She—*two* Persons in One God; or the Unity of the Holy One, blessed be *Hû*! and his Shechinah. *The Divine Husband and Wife* is mentioned in the Jewish Liturgy for Pentecost, ליחדא שכינתא בבעלה; and also in the daily repeated formula:—לשם יחוד קב"ה ושכינתיה ע"י ההוא טמיר ונעלם ברוך ה' לעולם i.e. "*In the name of the Union of the Holy and Blessed Hû and His Shechinah, the Hidden and Concealed Hû, blessed be* JEHOVAH *for ever!*"

The name HÛ, and the familiar name YAH, are of masculine and feminine gender respectively, and the union of the two forms the name of יהוה אחד ONE JEHOVAH: *one*, but of a *Bisexual Nature*, according to Kabbalists.

HÛ and YAH, in a separate form, used to be invoked in the second Temple on the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, an imitation of which, attended with all the ancient ceremonials now possible, may annually be witnessed in the orthodox synagogue *unto this day.*

draw, but simply to fill her pitcher. When Eliezer saw that the water rose towards Rebekah, he immediately ran towards her, and asked for a little water to drink.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: The text, "And she filled her pitcher, and came up," teaches us that as soon as she had filled her pitcher she immediately came up from the well; unlike the other damsels, who used to loiter at the well, Rebekah was modest and came up at once.

19 *And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also.*

21 *And the man wondered at her*, because Eliezer saw that God began to prosper him.

22 *The man took a golden nose-ring, of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold.* The Chizkûni writes: It is not stated, "And he gave it to the damsel;" but, "And the man took." This means that Eliezer took all in his hand, having it ready to give her when he ascertained who she was. And he asked first—

23 *Whose daughter art thou?* Another explanation is: He first gave the ornaments, and he asked her who she was, in order to show that he was very rich. But before Bethuel and Laban, he said that he first asked her, and then gave her the ornaments.

Rashi writes: The reason why he first gave her the ornaments was, because he fully relied on the merit of Abraham that she must be of Abraham's family. He therefore gave her a golden nose-ring of half a shekel weight, thus indicating that her children will give shekels, half a shekel each. The two bracelets stand for the two tables of the Covenant which her children would receive from God; and their weight being ten shekels symbolically indicated the Ten Commandments.

23, 25 *Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?* The term "to lodge in" is with a *Yod*[1] (in the original), which means to lodge in for *one* night. The reply, "Room to lodge

[1] לָלִין, with a *Yod*.

in" with a *Vav*[1] (in the original) means, "In my father's house there is room to lodge in for *many* nights."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Rebekah answered Eliezer with wisdom. He asked, "Is there room in thy father's house *for us* to lodge in *one* night?" But she answered him: "There is room to lodge in *many* nights," and omitted saying "*for you*," for she thought her father might not be willing to accommodate them with lodgings.

26 *And the man bowed his head and worshipped the Lord.* Eliezer bowed before God and thanked Him for having led him in the right way.

28 *And the damsel ran*, and told her mother, for it is natural that a daughter should tell all she knows to her mother.

29 *And Laban ran out unto the man.* When Laban saw the ornaments Rebekah had received from Eliezer, he ran to meet him at the well, and invited him to the house, saying unto Eliezer, "Come in, for we have cleared the house from the images of idols." He came in, and they gave food for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of his attendants.

33 *And there was meat set before him to eat.* But Eliezer said, "I will not eat till I have said what I have to say."

The B'chai and the Baal Hatturim write: They must have pressed him to eat quickly, but Eliezer said: "I am Abraham's servant; I cannot eat without first washing my hands and pronouncing the blessing on the washing of hands, and I must then repeat the benediction on the first morsel of bread." For Eliezer thought that by repeating these blessings he would be protected from evil. An angel came, in fact, and turned the side of the basin with the deadly poison towards Bethuel, who ate of it and instantly died, which explains verse 54, "And they did eat and drink, Eliezer and the men that were with him," and it is not stated that the household of Bethuel did eat with him, for they were mourners, because Bethuel died at the table.

[1] ולון with *Vav*, means the same as ליו with a *Yod*, viz. "to lodge."

Two hours after daybreak Eliezer left Haran with Rebekah. With the help of an angel they travelled in *one* day to Hebron, which was from Haran *seventeen* days' journey. The same distance of *seventeen* days' journey Eliezer travelled in *three hours only* when he left Abraham's house and went to Haran in search of Rebekah, as it is recorded in the text (ver. 42): "And I came *this* day unto the well"; that is to say "*This* day I left home, and *this* day I came to the well,"[1]

Eliezer rose up early, and when he saw the angel waiting, he said unto his host: "Do not detain me, but let Rebekah go with me."

When Eliezer and Rebekah were on the journey they saw Isaac in a field on the road. He saw them coming out from the garden of Eden. Rebekah prophetically seeing that Esau would be born of her, she fell down from the camel.

35 *And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great.* Eliezer praised Abraham his master, that he had much cattle and gold and silver and servants.

The Chizkûni writes: The reason why it is said, "And man-servants" without a *Yod*,[2] is to show us that Abraham had only *one* servant, Eliezer, who was to Abraham equal to many servants. And Eliezer said—

36 *Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old. After* she was old,[3] and my master legally made over all he had to his son.

The Chizkûni writes: Eliezer therefore specified that she bare a son *after* she was old, in order to prove that she would have no other child, and thus the son Isaac would *inherit all.*

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Eliezer praised his master Abraham, to prevent people from thinking that Isaac was not so pious and Abraham was not so rich, and therefore he came

[1] The Jews accept this fable as a fact, for as such it is authenticated in their holy Talmud. Vide *Treasures of the Talmud*, 232, 32.

[2] The *Yod* י followed by *Mem* ם is a grammatical sign of the plural number and masc. gender, and here the *Yod* is omitted.

[3] אחרי זקנתה.

there in search of a wife because it was not so easy to get one in his own land. Eliezer assured them that Abraham was very rich, and that Isaac was good and pious, for Sarah had given birth to him by a miracle when she was ninety years of age. He persuaded them, saying, "You will comprehend that God having wrought a miracle, will be sure to send you a good son in Isaac. Think not that the camels and the goods I display have been borrowed from other people, for 'The Lord hath blessed my master greatly' with wealth and he has no need to borrow from any one. The only reason my master has for sending me here is, that his son Isaac should not marry a woman of the Canaanites, but one of his own family, and my master took an oath from me to come to you for that purpose."

39, 40 *And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, The Lord will send His angel with thee, and prosper thy way*, that thou shalt be able to take a wife unto my son from my family.

Rashi writes: The word "*peradventure*" is written (in the original Hebrew) without a *Vav*,[1] and therefore it means "*unto me*," for Eliezer said unto Abraham: "Let thy son Isaac be allied unto me by marrying my daughter." But Abraham objected and said: "My son is blessed of God, and thou art a Canaanite and cursed, therefore my son cannot marry thy daughter."

The Chizkûni writes: Scripture has here shown (by omitting the letter *Vav*) that Eliezer wished Isaac should marry his daughter, and has not alluded to it before when Abraham commissioned him to fetch a wife unto Isaac from his own family, in order to prove that Eliezer praised Isaac before the parents of Rebekah, and said: "I myself was solicitous to give my daughter to Isaac, but my master Abraham objected to it."

47 *And I asked her and said, Whose daughter art thou? . . . and I put the ring upon her nose.* Eliezer related unto them

[1] It is written אֵלַי instead of אוֹלַי

all that occurred and all he did on that day; how he travelled from Hebron in three hours—a distance of seventeen days' journey, as it is stated in the text: "*And I came this day* unto the well"—that is to say: "This day I left home, and this day I came to the well. I also asked her whose daughter she was, and afterwards I gave her the presents."

Rashi says: He first gave her the presents and then he asked her whose daughter she was, because he relied on Abraham's merit that she must be of his family.[1] Before Rebekah's parents he said the *reverse*, lest they should taunt him: "What a fool thou art, to give such valuable presents to a maiden without first knowing who she was." This is the reason why he *reversed* the statement, and said: "I asked her whose daughter she was, and afterwards gave her the presents."

49 *And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me.* The Imrae Noam asks: What need had he to beg them so earnestly? Did they decline giving up Rebekah to such a rich house? The reply is: They had heard that the children of Abraham would be obliged to go into captivity, and therefore they would not give Rebekah to Isaac. Hence Eliezer had to beg much: "Deal kindly and truly with my master."

Rabbi Isseril asks: Why did Eliezer say, "kindly and truly"? The term "*truly*" is never employed except when a kindness has been done to a dead person when there is no hope to receive a kindness in return, for then it is "kindly and truly," in other words "a true kindness"—hoping for no return. The reply is: Eliezer was very clever, and he said unto them, "I beg you to do *a true kindness* to my master, and do not desire that he should repay you for the same."

[1] Merit and luck are often two convertible terms. The luck of Abraham gave Eliezer the assurance that he would be led to give the presents to none other but to the right damsel. Luck is blind, and lucky people need not see what they are about to do, for their luck will not be so unlucky as to mislead them.

*That I may turn to the right hand or to the left.* "If ye will not give me Rebekah," said Eliezer, "then I shall be obliged to take a wife unto Isaac of the daughters of Ishmael, or of the daughters of Lot."

50 *Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.* Laban was a wicked man; he spoke before his father did, but his father had let him speak first because he was shrewd in his speech. He said first "*bad*" and then "*good*," because he always thought more of bad than of good.

The B'chai says: From this we learn that every matrimonial engagement is formed by God, as it is here stated: "*The thing proceedeth from the Lord.*" Our sages say: Forty days before a man is born, a Bath Kol proclaims: So and so shall marry so and so.[1]

51 *Behold Rebekah is before thee, take her and go to thy master, as the Lord hath spoken.* When Eliezer heard this, he worshipped and thanked God. He then gave Rebekah costly jewels of gold and silver, and beautiful dresses, and with these he betrothed her. To her brother and mother he gave choice fruit as a present.

54 *And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night.* On arising the following morning, the angel came again to Eliezer ready to accompany him, and Eliezer said: "Send me home to my master."

55 *And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a year or ten months, after that she will go.* Bethuel said nothing, for he was dead (as already mentioned).

The Chizkûni asks: Yesterday they said, "*Behold Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go,*" why now ask that the girl should abide with them a year, or at least ten months? The answer is: They at first thought that the girl was to be en-

[1] These two passages are drawn from the Talmud. Vide *Moed Katon*, fol. 18B, and *Soteh*, fol. 2A. Bath Kol, *i.e.* The daughter of a voice, an echo, a voice from heaven.

gaged by Isaac in person, and as an engagement is not to be put off, they said, "Take her and go"; but now finding that Eliezer engaged her on behalf of Isaac by proxy, and the engagement was secure, they said, "Let her tarry with us a few months, that we may have time to fit her out with a wardrobe and ornaments."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Laban was a great rogue; he did not say before, "Let Rebekah abide for the purpose of fitting her out with a costly trousseau," lest Eliezer should take him at his word; he therefore said first, "take her, and go," expecting that Eliezer would be surprised and raise no question about dowry. But when Laban noticed that Eliezer thanked God for the engagement, he then proposed that Rebekah should tarry for her trousseau, well knowing that Eliezer would not sacrifice *even one day* for all the trousseau and dowry offered to him.

57 *And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth,* whether she will go. From this our sages deduce that an orphan girl must be asked whether she approves of the husband selected for her.

58 *And she said, I will go.* The B'chai asks a question in this section: Why does the text sometimes call Eliezer servant, and sometimes man, which means an estimable man? The reply is: Before Eliezer came to the well and had seen the angel, the text calls him servant, but afterwards it calls him *man*, because an angel appeared unto him, and out of respect to him who was called Ish (man), Eliezer had the honour of being called (Ish) man. And hence as soon as Rebekah was handed over to Eliezer, the commission of the angel ceased, and the text calls Eliezer again servant, as for instance: "And the servant brought forth jewels of silver"; "And the servant took Rebekah"; "And the servant told Isaac," thus he is always called *servant.* But it may be asked: Why did Laban and his mother say to Rebekah, "Wilt thou go with this *man*?" The answer is: They were ashamed to call

Eliezer to his face *servant;* also out of respect to Rebekah they called him "*man.*" When all this was over, the text says—

61 *They followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.* This means they followed the angel, whose name was Ish (man); but the servant Eliezer took Rebekah, and went his way.

The Ramban asks: What need had Eliezer to take her, since she willingly went by herself? The answer is: The women (of the place) went to accompany Rebekah, and Eliezer fearing lest they should abscond with her, took her by the hand to be near him and under his guard.

62 *And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi.* And Isaac came from the garden of Eden, where he had been three years to cure himself of the wound which his father inflicted on his throat when he bound him upon the altar on Mount Moriah.

63 *And Isaac went out towards the evening into the field to repeat the afternoon prayers,*[1] and he then saw camels approaching. Rebekah lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac from a distance going to and fro in a bashful manner, for when he saw Eliezer coming with his bride he felt bashful. Rebekah thought, all men run to see a bride, but he who does not run must be the bridegroom, and she too became bashful and frightened in his presence, and alighted from the camel.

65 *She said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? and the servant said, It is my master. Therefore she took a veil and covered herself.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why did Eliezer say now of Isaac, "*It is my master?*" In the whole of this section he speaks of Isaac as the son of Abraham his master, but Isaac himself he never

[1] The Talmud informs us that Abraham was the first who instituted the Morning Prayer according to the present form in the Jewish Liturgy; that יצחק תקן תפלת מנחה, Isaac instituted the Afternoon Prayer. *Berachoth*, fol. 26B.

called master. The answer is: So long as Isaac had no wife he was no master, but now with Rebekah by his side he was master.

67 *And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent:* that is to say, he fancied his mother was still living; for all the time Sarah was living, her candles continually burned from Sabbath to Sabbath, and there was a blessing in the dough Sarah made, and a cloud rested over her tent,[1] but as soon as Sarah died these three (miraculous) things disappeared. But when Rebekah came they were restored, hence Isaac fancied his mother was still living.

The Eben Shoaeb writes: Sarah really came after her death into the tent of Rebekah to see the happiness of her son Isaac, which explains the words: "And Isaac brought her into her tent, Sarah his mother;"[2] that is, he brought Rebekah into the tent, and Sarah his mother was personally also there.

*And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.* It is usual for a man to be with his mother so long as she lives, but when she dies then he usually is with his wife.

CHAPTER XXV.—1 *Then again Abraham took a wife.* The B'chai, the Toldoth Yitzkhac and the Chizkûni write: From this we learn, that if a man loses a wife and he has children, he should not marry another wife till his children are married, otherwise he will not be able to effect good alliances for them, because people would say that the issue of his second wife will inherit all his property. Therefore, Abraham gave first a wife unto Isaac, and then he took a wife himself.

*And her name was Keturah.* That was Hagar, and the text calls her Keturah because it signifies (in Aramaic) to bind up with knots. Since she was separated from Abraham she had bound herself with knots and did not let any other man come in to her. Kings and princes sought her in marriage because

[1] See *ante*, p. 128.

[2] Such being the literal rendering of the original.

she was the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, but she refused them all and waited for Abraham. She had many children by Abraham, but they were not honest people.

The B'chai writes: It follows from the text, Keturah was Hagar, for it is said, "*Then again Abraham took a wife.*" It may be asked, What need is there to say, "*Then again*"? Why not simply say, He took a wife." It must be inferred that Keturah was Hagar whom he once before had for a wife, and "*Then again*," he took her once more.

Again it is inferred, that Keturah was Hagar, for how is it conceivable that Abraham should give away all his property to Isaac, and the children of Keturah no share in the inheritance?

5 *And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.* The Talmud says: That it is not permissible to take away the inheritance from one son and give to another, even from a bad son to a good one, for all should inherit share and share alike. But the answer is: Keturah was Hagar, the maidservant of Sarah, and the children of a slave are as slaves, and *slaves do not inherit.*

Another explanation why Hagar was called Keturah, is because her good works were as beautiful as incense.[1] Though Rashi writes, that Hagar returned to idolatry, he also says, that her good works were as beautiful as Ketoreth (i.e. *incense*), and the explanation is: She repented and became pious, and was called Keturah.

*And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.* Abraham gave Isaac a legal document which entitled him to inherit all his property. But it cannot be that Abraham handed over *all* his property to Isaac *while he yet lived;* for how did Abraham know that he would soon die? perhaps he might live long and then be obliged to trust to Isaac for his very food.

[1] This is a play on the word "incense," which in Hebrew is Ketoreth, and being similar in sound to Keturah, a connection is hammered out of the two words, Keturah and Ketoreth.

6 *But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts.* Scripture has written (the word Pilagshim) concubines without a *Yod*,[1] to show that he (Abraham) had only one concubine, Keturah; and because she was very pious Abraham took her.

Rashi observes: In the first instance the text speaks of "*wife*," and in the next of "*concubine*;" a wife has a marriage contract and a concubine has not. Hagar, though a concubine, had a marriage contract, and hence the text speaks of her as a wife, that is to say, she was esteemed by Abraham as a legal wife and he gave her a marriage contract; but with reference to her children as heirs, she is named concubine, that her children should not share in the inheritance.

Rashi also observes: When Abraham gave away all his property to Isaac, he gave presents to the children of the concubine: viz. as a present he communicated to them the name of God, though they did not keep themselves in purity.[2]

The Debek Tov asks: What induced Abraham to do this?

[1] דיא תורה האט נישריבען פלגשם אן איין יו"ד, *i.e.* The Torah has written Pilagshim (concubines) without a *Yod*. Here a very serious question arises. We have examined several Hebrew Bibles, we consulted the Hebrew Concordance, and have referred to the Talmud itself, but failed to find anywhere the word without the *Yod*. Evidently this very positive statement is made on the authority of Rashi, and this is asserted by Rashi in as positive a manner. The question now is: assuming that such a high authority would not make a deliberate misstatement, when, and by whom, was the text of our present Hebrew Bibles interfered with? Who inserted the *Yod*? Or has the *Yod* always been there? In any case this passage is remarkable for boldly presuming on the ignorance or carelessness of the ordinary Jewish reader.

[2] The version of this passage in the Talmud, and there commented on by Rashi, is to this effect: Abraham delivered to the children he had by Keturah, שם טומאה, "The name of uncleanness," with which they learned to practise witchcraft and do the works of the devil. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 91A.

"The name of uncleanness" is the antonym of שם המפורש "the ineffable name" of *Jehovah*. Miracles and wonders were and still are performed by the Rabbis by the means of the *Shem-hammephorash*. So the Jews say. See *Tal. Misc.*, p. 321.

The answer is: Abraham knew that they would dwell among idolatrous nations; and in order that they should not mingle with them, He taught them to be able to mention the secret name of God, although they were impure.

Rashi further observes: At the time Eliezer went after Rebekah, Abraham already gave a document that Isaac should inherit all he had; why give the same over again here? Hence observes Rashi: Rabbi Nehemiah said: He gave him the power to bless whomsoever he wished to bless, and he whom he blessed should also be blessed.

8 *An old man and full.* Abraham died old and full. The B'chai asks: Why is it not stated full of many years and many days? The answer is: Abraham did not follow the pleasures of the world, that he should seek after much money, as it is said in Scripture: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver" (Eccles. v. 10). And the sages in the Gemara have likewise said: No man dies with half his desires realized;[1] for when he has a hundred gulden, he wishes for two hundred; hence says the text with reference to Abraham, he was "*full*" of everything, for he was satisfied and content with all he had, or with what he had.

*And Abraham gave up the ghost and died.* "Giving up the ghost" means to pass away quickly with ease and without pain; and is used only with reference to the death of the righteous. Thus writes Rashi: It is asked why is the same term, of giving up the ghost, also used of the generation of the Deluge? To this answers the Toldoth Yitzkhac: Of the wicked the term, of giving up the ghost, is used for *evil;* they

[1] אין אדם מת וחצי טובתו בידו. This edifying passage is often quoted and with some variation, but no one has ever referred to fol. and col. in the Talmud where it is found; and for this simple reason—*it is not there.* Similarly, Dr. Adler, in *The Nineteenth Century* for July, 1878, p. 138, credits the Talmud with an important doctrinal statement which is nowhere to be found there. Their own abstention from translating the Talmud, and the obstacles the Jews throw in the way of its translation by others, render these misquotations both frequent and safe.

die quickly, that they should not be able to leave their last will for their children, as was the case with the generation of the Deluge; they died quickly. But of a righteous man the term is *for good;* he dies quickly, but without pain, and leaves behind his last will and testament.

9 *And Isaac and Ishmael buried him.* The text teaches us that Ishmael had repented and had honoured Isaac by giving him the precedence, as Isaac was more righteous than he; had not Ishmael repented, God would not have permitted him to bury Abraham. So says Rashi, as also the Ramban and the B'chai.

11 *And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac,* with the (formal) blessing of mourners, to console him.[1] Another explanation is: Abraham did *not* wish to bless Isaac, because he foresaw that Esau would come out of him; he then said, "Let God bless whom He will,"—and God blessed Isaac.

END OF SECTION V.

19 *And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son; Abraham begat Isaac.* Here it is stated that Isaac was the son of Abraham, and then is added "Abraham begat Isaac." Why this repetition? Because the two sons of Isaac (Jacob and Esau) being so opposite in character might have caused people to suspect that Sarah had become pregnant by Abimelech; and that Isaac (her son) had taken half after Sarah, a pious woman, and half after Abimelech, who was a heathen, thus accounting for Isaac, in turn, begetting Jacob and Esau, resembling Sarah and Abimelech respectively; God therefore made Isaac to be exactly like Abraham,[2] so that everybody acknowledged that "Abraham begat Isaac."

[1] A form of prayer said in the house of a mourner, as prescribed in the *Book of Life*, p. 86, and in the Jewish Liturgy.

[2] This is a fanciful inference from the repetition in the text, which the words themselves do not warrant.

The Chizkûni writes: The text distinguishes Isaac as being born under legal qualifications, for it says "*Abraham begat Isaac*," that is to say, after God called his name with a *He* (not Abram but Abra*H*am), and this was after his circumcision, *then* it was that he begat Isaac; not as Ishmael, who was born when Abraham was yet uncircumcised. The Toldoth Yitzkhac also writes in a similar sense.

20 *And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife.* Rashi asks: Why did Isaac remain so long without a wife, since the sages say, that a man should marry at eighteen years of age? It may also be asked: Why does the text record that he was forty years old? The answer is: She was his predestined wife, and he was obliged to wait till she became a little older and fit to marry.[1]

*The daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.* Rashi asks: What need had the text to state that she was the daughter of Bethuel and the sister of Laban, since we knew this already? The answer is: Although they both were wicked, yet Rebekah was a pious woman, and did not copy their evil works.

21 *Against his wife* (A.V. *for* his wife). Isaac prayed over against his wife; that is to say, he placed himself in one corner and Rebekah in another corner, and thus they prayed.

*And the Lord was entreated of him.* Of him, not of her; because he was a righteous man, the son of a righteous man; but she was a righteous woman, the daughter of a wicked man.

22 And the children struggled together * * * * They quarrelled about this world and the world to come, and Rebekah said: "If the pain of child-bearing is so great, why did I pray for children?"

[1] For Rebekah was only three years and three days old when she left her father's house. *Sophrim*, chap. xxi. The Talmud says in several places that בת שלשים ויום א׳ מתקדשת בביאה, a girl three years and one day old is marriageable. See *Sanhedrin*, fol. 55B.

From *Tosephoth in Zevamoth*, fol. 61B, it would seem that Rebekah was *fourteen* years old when she married.

*And she went to inquire of the Lord.* Rebekah went to the Beth-Hammidrash (school) of Shem and Eber to inquire of God why the children struggled? God ordered them to inform her: "Two worthy children are in thy womb;" for it is said,

23 *Two nations.* This means, two lords; out of Jacob will descend Rabbi, who will be a prince, a lord over the Jews; and out of Esau will descend Antoninus, who will be a king over (the children of) Esau.

Rabbi and Antoninus made a covenant (of friendship) between themselves and lived together. Rashi writes: That neither in summer nor in winter was there absent from their tables such good eatables that help digestion, namely *radish* and *horseradish*. But be it here said, Rabbi never followed after pleasures, but having been very rich, and having had many servants and a large household, he fed them all so liberally that it was necessary to give them radish and horse-radish to excite their appetite and to digest their food. But Rabbi himself, when he was dying, lifted up his ten fingers towards heaven and said: "Lord of the universe! Thou knowest that not even with my little finger did I seek to enjoy anything of this world."[1]

24 *And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why did Isaac wait ten years before he prayed on behalf of Rebekah? The answer is: He did pray sooner, but God would not hear his prayer in order that that wicked man (Esau) should not come so soon into the world, and hence it is said: "When her days to be delivered *were fulfilled*," God made that wicked one tarry *full* nine months, that he should not come so soon into the world; but Moses, being righteous, remained only six months and a few days. Hence also the word *twins*

[1] The same story, differing somewhat in detail, is recorded in the Talmud. For an interesting sketch of this holy Rabbi, consult *Index to the Treasures of the Talmud*.

(in the original)[1] is written without an *Aleph*, because one of the twins was wicked, but by Tamar the word "twin" is (in the original) written with an *Aleph*,[2] because both children, Pharez and Zarah, were righteous.

Some sages ask: Why did not Rebekah inquire of Isaac himself about the children's struggling in her womb, since he also was a prophet? The answer is: She was afraid lest Isaac should say, "Since thou hast more pain than all other women, thou must have more sins than all other women," and he would divorce her.

25 *And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment, and they called his name Esau;* because he was already covered with hair as a child that has been born a long time.

26 *And after that came his brother, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel ... and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.* Rashi asks: Why did Isaac wait for twenty years with his prayer (for children), since it is usual for prayer to be made when a wife has had no children for ten years only? The answer is: Isaac first waited ten years till Rebekah became thirteen years old, when she should be capable to beget children, and from her age of thirteen he waited ten years, as is usual, and then he prayed.

27 *And the boys grew, and Esau was a cunning hunter.* So long as they were yet very young, people did not know whether their works were good or evil; but when they grew up, then went Esau into an idolatrous temple, but Jacob went to a Beth-Hammidrash (a rabbinical school).

*A cunning hunter;* one that devised cunning tricks; Esau used to ask his father (cunningly) how he might give tithes even of salt and straw, thus leading Isaac to think him devoted to pious observances.

*And Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.* Jacob was a

[1] תומים without an Aleph (א) instead of תאומים with the Aleph.

[2] Chap. xxxvii. 27.

pious man without guile; he sat in the Beth-Hammidrash and studied the Torah (Law).[1]

29 *And Jacob sod pottage.* Jacob cooked lentils, and *Esau came from the field,* and was tired and faint from the *murders* of the day.[2]

30 *And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me with the red lentils, for I am faint, therefore was his name called Edom,* which means (in Hebrew) "Red." The reason why Jacob cooked lentils on that day was because his father Isaac was a mourner for his father Abraham, who died on that day five years before his time, in order that he might not (have the pain to) see how Esau proceeded in his evil course. The reason why lentils are cooked for a mourner (whereby to condole with him) is to show symbolically, as lentils are round, so death rolls round from one man to another.[3]

31 *And Jacob said, Sell me, as clear as the day,*[4] *thy birthright.* Because the office of the sacrifices had to be performed by the firstborn, therefore Jacob thought that such a wicked man would not be proper for the office. Esau, on his part, thought that such an office can cause death; for when one enters the temple, or when one is drunk with wine and performs such an office, he is guilty of death; therefore, he thought, I do not wish to have the birthright.

The B'chai writes: It was the custom in the olden times, that after the father's death the children used to show great respect

[1] By the term Torah (תורה) is usually understood, either the Pentateuch only, or the *whole law; i.e.* both the written and the oral law—the Bible and the Talmud. Here the Torah means the *whole* law.

[2] רציחות literally *murders;* the very word used being that which occurs in the Decalogue, לא תרצח, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod. xx. 13). See chap. xlix. 5.

[3] This exposition, but considerably different on some points, is to be found in the Talmud, *Bava-Bathra,* fol. 16B.

[4] "As clear as the day," *i.e.* without any mental reservation, *honestly.* The original Hebrew, כיום, "as the day," will bear this meaning, though forced and far-fetched.

to the firstborn and seated him in his father's place. "This honour," said Esau, "what is that to me that I should wait for it till after my father's death! Nobody knows *who* will die first, especially as I go daily among wild beasts (hunting), perhaps they will kill me first" ("Thus Esau despised his birthright").

CHAPTER XXVI.—1, 2 *And there was a famine in the land. . . . And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt.* Thou art not as thy father, who on account of the famine went down into Egypt, for thou hast been a sacrifice upon the altar, and therefore the outside land (*i.e.* beyond the Land of Israel) is not worthy to have thee upon it.

3 *Sojourn in this land*, for I will give it unto thy children, and will bless them to be as many (in number) as the stars of heaven.

5 *Because Abraham obeyed My voice*, and was pious. Our sages deduce from this, that Abraham learned to know his Creator when he was three years old, for he lived 175 years, and "*Because*"[1] (in the original Hebrew) has the numerical value of 172, that is three years less than his whole lifetime during which he obeyed God's voice, and observed the whole law even before it was given (on Mount Sinai).

The B'chai asks: If the Patriarchs indeed kept the whole law, why did Jacob marry two sisters? and why did Amram marry his aunt,[2] which the law forbids.[3] The Ramban and the Toldoth Yitzkhac reply: The principle of a precept is that the precept be observed in the *Land of Israel only*, but Jacob married two sisters outside the land (*i.e.* in a foreign country), and also Amram married his aunt in Egypt. As for Joseph having observed the Sabbath[4] in Egypt, that was because the

[1] עקב = 172.

[2] Amram was the father of Moses, and he married his aunt (Exod. vi. 20).

[3] See Lev. xviii. 12.

[4] A Gentile unbeliever might ask: Where is it recorded in Scripture that Joseph observed the Sabbath in Egypt? To this the orthodox Jew

Sabbath is the greatest commandment and weightier than all the commandments of the law.

Rabbi Isseril gives another reply: Jacob married two sisters, because he thought the only reason the law forbids it is, to prevent jealousy and hatred between two wives who were sisters, and he *knew* there would be no jealousy and hatred between these sisters (Rachel and Leah).

6 *And Isaac dwelt in Gerar.* The citizens asked him who Rebekah was, and he said: "*She is my sister*," for he was afraid, she being so very beautiful, the people would kill him and take away Rebekah.

8 *And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech looked out at a window, and saw Isaac sporting with Rebekah.*

10 *And Abimelech said, What is this that thou hast done*

might reply thus: We have it often repeated in our Talmud: אעפ"י שאין ראיה לדבר זכר לדבר, *i.e.* Though there is no proof of the matter, there is a mnemonic reminder of it. According to Scripture, as explained by Jewish commentators, we are mnemonically reminded that ביאה "*Bee-ah*" stands in close connection with the observance of the Sabbath, for it is written (Exod. xxxi. 16), ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת, *i.e.* Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath. The initial letter of "בני "ישראל "את "השבת make up the word ביאה Bee-ah, the meaning of which need not be told to the Hebrew scholar. Now without Bee-ah there can be no procreation, and as Joseph had children in Egypt, it is a mnemonic proof that he kept the Sabbath there. Then we are also reminded of the fact by the Sabbatical hymn in the Jewish Liturgy, which commences, מה יפית ומה נעמת בתענוגים את שבת משוש נונים לך בשר ונם דנים ונו', *i.e.* How beautiful and how pleasant among pleasures art thou, O Sabbath, thou joy of the sorrowful, to thee belongeth flesh and also fish, etc. Now the first and last letters of Joseph's name (יוסף) are the same as the first two letters of the second word of the Sabbatical hymn (יפית), which may serve as a mnemonical *reminder* of the fact, and we have no difficulty in believing that Joseph kept the Sabbath, which was to him a vast comfort and joy, when sorrowful in one of the prisons in Egypt. To unbelievers this may appear fanciful and visionary, but to the orthodox Jew all is as clear as the day! Thus then the sons of Joseph and the hymn alluded to are mnemonic reminders that Joseph kept the Sabbath in Egypt.

*unto us*, in saying that she was thy sister? One of the people might have lien with her, and thou wouldest have caused us to sin.

11 *And Abimelech commanded: He that toucheth Isaac and his wife shall be put to death.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why did Abimelech say: "*What is this thou hast done unto us?*" and Pharaoh said: "What is this thou hast done unto me?"[1] The answer is: Pharaoh said unto Abraham, "I am not angry that thou considerest my people to be fond of fornication; for hadst thou even told them that she was thy wife they would still have debauched her; but *I*, hadst thou told *me* that she was thy wife, I would not have touched her; but thou hast said she was thy sister, and therefore I wanted to marry her." But on the other hand, Abimelech said unto Isaac, "I and *my people* are righteous; hadst thou told *us* all that she was thy wife, *we* would not have touched her." And this is the reason why Pharaoh said unto Abraham, "Get away from here,[2] for it will be of no use even if I proclaim that thy wife should not be touched." On the other hand, Abimelech had proclaimed, "He who toucheth this man and his wife shall surely be put to death." Thus all feared to touch her.

The Ramban asks: Did not Abimelech see that Isaac had two children with him, Jacob and Esau; how is it that he did not know that Rebekah was his wife? The answer is: He thought the children to have been by another wife.

12 *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him.* Rashi asks: Why did he count, since no blessing rests upon a thing when counted or measured?[3] The answer is: Tithes had to be given, and hence the necessity of counting it. Yet, for the

[1] Chap. xii. 18.

[2] Chap. xii. 19.

[3] No supernatural increase can be expected in things that have already been weighed, measured, or counted; to pray for a blessing on known quantities is a תפילת שוא, *false prayer*. *Bava-Metzia*, fol. 42A. See also *Gen. acc. to the Talmud*, 131, 9.

merit of giving tithes, there was a blessing even *after* counting, so that of one measure of seed sown grew a hundred measures, and Isaac became so rich that it was (commonly) said, that the dung of his mules was productive of more money than the gold and silver of Abimelech. A question is asked: Why was the saying with reference to the dung of his *mules*, and not of his other cattle? The answer is: The saying was expressed as a marvel, for (as a rule) there is no blessing in mules, but in *Isaac's mules* there was a blessing.

15 *All the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped them, and filled them with earth*, for, said they, when an army comes to beseige the city, and find no water, they will be obliged to quit the place.

18 *And Isaac digged again the wells of water;* and when his servants completed a well, the herdsmen of Abimelech quarrelled about it, and Isaac called the name of the well Esek, which means quarrel.

21 *And they digged another well, and they quarrelled about that also, and he called the name of it Sitnah*, which means hatred. He digged a third time a well, and as there was no strife about it, he called it Rehoboth, that is to say: "God made spacious room and peace for us."

23, 24 *And he went up from thence to Beersheba, and the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham's sake.*

25–30 Isaac builded an altar and praised God; he pitched his tent and digged a well. Abimelech and his princes called upon Isaac, and he said unto them: "*Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?*" Abimelech answered, "Because we have seen that God has done many wonders with thy father and with thee, therefore came we to make a covenant with thee." And Isaac made a covenant with them.

34, 35 *And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite.* He took wives from idolaters and gave them Jewish names, to show thereby that they were pious women, but for all that they did not please Isaac and Rebekah.

CHAPTER XXVII.—1 *And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim.* He therefore became blind, that he should not recognise Jacob, and should bless him. Another explanation is: The smoke (of incense) which Esau's wives made before their idols destroyed his eyes, for Isaac was not accustomed to the smoke as Rebekah was, for in her father's house also was a smoke made before the idol.

Another explanation is: When Isaac was bound on the altar he saw the Shechinah, and therefore he became blind.[1]

2 *And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.* The Chizkûni writes: Isaac said to Esau, "When I die thou wilt have no money, no princely power and no honour, because thou hast sold thy birthright, therefore I will give thee (all these) whilst I am yet alive, that Jacob should not be able to take away the same from thee."

Rashi writes: He therefore said, "*I know not the day of my death*," because when a man has reached the age of his father, or of his mother, he should be anxiously concerned lest he dies at the same age as his father or his mother died.

3 *Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons*, and sharpen them, and go to the fields and catch for me some venison,

4 *That I may eat, and my soul bless thee before I die.* Isaac said to Esau, "Bring me something to eat and I will bless thee." The Chizkûni writes: Isaac told him, "Thou hast sold the birthright for something to eat, and I will bless thee and restore unto thee thy princely power, also for something to eat."

[1] Besides looking at the Shechinah, there are three things at which if a man gaze his eyes become dim: viz. the rainbow, the prince, and the priests when in the act of lifting up their hands to bless the congregation. *Chagiggah*, fol. 16A.

The B'chai writes: Isaac said, "Bring me something to eat in order that I should be cheerful, as by merriment I shall be able to bless thee; for our sages say, that (the spirit of) prophecy does not rest on a man when in a melancholy mood, but when he is cheerful.[1]

The B'chai asks: What need had he to eat in order to be merry, he might have effected this by musical instruments, as our prophets used to do when they were melancholy? The answer is: Isaac wished to cheer his spirits by means of the very things with which he wished to bless Esau; for the blessing of Esau was, "The dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."[2]

5 *And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.* That is to say, he thought if he found a beast in the field, well and good; and if not, he was "*to bring it*" from anywhere, and anyhow he was "*to bring it*," even by means of theft or robbery.[3]

6 *And Rebekah spake unto Jacob:* "Thy father ordered Esau to bring him to eat, and he will bless him; therefore—

9 *Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids, and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth*, in order that he may bless thee." Rebekah used the terms, "And fetch *me*," which means to say: "The two kids are *mine*; for thy father, Isaac, has specified in my marriage contract to give *me* every day two kids."

11, 12 *And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: my father peradventure will feel me, and recognise me, and will curse me.* (A.V., I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.)

13 *And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my*

[1] *Shabbath*, fol. 30B.

[2] Ver. 28.

[3] The animus against Esau is betrayed in this gratuitous assumption.

*son.* The Chizkûni writes: She said unto him, "Fear not, for God had said, *The elder shall serve the younger.*"[1]

The Chizkûni gives another explanation: Rebekah said, "Isaac will curse me, not thee; for he will think that I gave you the advice, because I heard how he wished to bless Esau."

The Chizkûni adds yet another explanation: She said, "Rather will I curse thee when thou wilt not obey me; but Isaac will not curse thee, because thou doest him good in giving him to eat."

The Imrae Noam gives this explanation of the phrase, "*Upon me be thy curse, my son*": Rebekah said, "I will make up for thy curse; if thy father disinherit thee, I will give thee all I have by my marriage contract, and thou wilt have enough."

Rebekah took the garments of Esau which he usually wore when hunting, and put them upon Jacob, and the skins of the kids she put upon his hands and neck, in order that Isaac should think that he was Esau.

Esau deposited his garments for safety with his mother; for though he had many wives, he would trust none of them with his garments, because he knew them to be wicked.

18 *And Jacob came unto his father* with the savoury meat prepared by his mother. The Eben Shoaeb writes: Jacob did not wish to impose on his father by telling a lie. He wept, and would not carry the meat till Rebekah forced it into his hands; he still would not proceed, till Rebekah told him that angels would go with him to his father. As he came to the door he fell down in a fainting fit, but God sent Michael and Gabriel, who led him by his two hands to his father.

Rebekah gave no wine to Jacob, for she did not wish that Isaac should be red at the blessing of Jacob, because Esau (Edom) signifies *red.*[2] But Michael brought wine from the garden of Eden. As soon as Jacob came out of the door, Esau arrived, but Michael hid Jacob that Esau should not see him.

[1] Chap. xxv. 23. [2] *Vide* chap. xxv. 25.

19 *I am Esau thy firstborn.* The B'chai and the Chizkûni write: God so ruled that Esau sold the birthright to Jacob, in order that Jacob should receive the blessings from his father. When his father asked him, "Who art thou?" he answered, "I am Esau thy firstborn;" that is to say, "I am in the place of thy firstborn Esau, for he sold me the birthright."

*I have done according as thou badest me.* The B'chai asks: Did Isaac bid *him* to bring meat? The reply is: "*Me*," means, for my sake, or concerning me; that is to say, "Rebekah heard that thou didst bid to bring meat, and she bade *me* to bring it." "I have many times done according as thou badest me." The Chizkûni writes: One may sometimes hide the truth if necessary. Abraham said of Sarah, She was his sister and not his wife. And Isaac asked Jacob, "Why hast thou come so quickly from the field?"

20 *And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.* Isaac then thought that this must be Jacob, for Esau never mentioned the name of God. As Isaac esteemed Esau as a righteous man, why was it a wonder to him that he should mention God's name, since a righteous man often does so? The reply is: Isaac thought that Esau, when in the field hunting, often had to go into unclean places, and therefore he accustomed himself not to mention God's name even when at home. And now God's name being mentioned, Isaac concluded that it must be Jacob, who never went into unclean places, and was in the habit of mentioning God's name.

22 *And he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice*—for he spake gently and Esau spake roughly—*but the hands are the hands of Esau.* The Midrash writes: "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau"; that is to say: When Esau would do something (harmful with his hands) these hands would by the (voice) studying the Law, and by (the voice of) prayer *defend* themselves.

The Chizkûni writes: Isaac said, "In the voice I do not recognise whether this be Esau, because a man speaks some-

times in a gentle and sometimes in a rough voice; but by the hands I recognise for sure and certain that this *is Esau*, because they are hairy." Therefore he blessed him.

25 *And he brought him wine, and he drank.* The Chizkûni writes: He therefore brought him wine, because it confuses a man, that he should not recognise him.

27 *And he smelled the smell of his raiment.* Rashi asks: The skins of goats have no pleasant odour, what pleasant smell did he smell? The answer is: Jacob had on the garments of Esau, which belonged to Adam when in the garden of Eden, and therefore these garments had the smell of Paradise. On these garments were painted all sorts of animals, and when Esau went to hunt in them, all animals were attracted by them, and thus he was enabled to catch any animal he pleased.

29 *And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.* The Debek Toy asks: They had but one father, why did he not say, "The children of thy father"? The Chizkûni replies: Isaac thought Rebekah being yet young, she would marry another husband and would have other children, therefore he said, "*Thy mother's sons*," even those which she will have by another husband.

*Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.* Rashi asks: Why is it by Balaam first written, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee," and afterwards, "Cursed is he that curseth thee"?[1] The reply is: In this world it goes first hard with the righteous, and afterwards it goes well with them, therefore said Isaac first, "Cursed is he that curseth thee," and afterwards, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee;" but with the wicked, it first goes well with them, and then bad, therefore said Balaam first, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee," and afterwards, "Cursed is he that curseth thee."

The Chizkûni remarks: Although Isaac held Esau to be a righteous man, yet he knew that he was a quarrelsome one, and many hated him and would curse him, therefore he said

[1] Num. xxiv. 9.

first, "Cursed be those that curse thee," because those that cursed were more numerous than those that blessed.

31 *Get up my father!* The Chizkûni observes: Isaac fell asleep after eating the meat of Jacob, therefore he said "*Get up my father*, and eat of my meat."

32, 33 *And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly.* The Midrash observes: It ought to have been stated simply "very greatly," which meant to say, *a great fright;* but "very exceedingly," means a frightfully great fright. But Isaac, when he had been bound on the altar, was very much frightened, and now he was still more frightened, because he noticed Hell entered into Esau, so that even the walls of the house trembled; therefore it is stated (in the text) "*very exceedingly.*"

*And Isaac said, Who is he?* God answered him, "He that hunteth for venison, the Esau that captures animals."

*And I have eaten of all the dainties before thou camest, and I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed.* And therefore did Isaac say, "*And he shall be blessed*," that people should not say, "If Jacob had not practised deception he would not have been blessed." Therefore when Isaac became afterwards aware of the deception, he nevertheless said, "*Yea, and he shall be blessed.*"

The Chizkûni writes: Isaac said, "It is no wonder that I mistook Jacob for Esau, for I am blind; but God well knows why He took away the blessing from the firstborn and gave it to the younger, '*yea, and he shall be blessed*'; as a matter of course he must be blessed, for I blessed according to the intention of God; and as Jacob, moreover, bought the birthright of Esau, it is but just and right that he should be blessed."

The Chizkûni gives yet another explanation: Isaac said, "Jacob must now remain blessed, because I blessed him, that those who bless him shall be blessed, and those that curse him shall be cursed, and now if I curse him I shall *curse myself.*

Should it be said: Neither curse nor bless him; '*yea, and he shall be blessed*,' because if I bless him *I bless myself*."

34, 35, 36 *He cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, also me, O my father! And he said, Thy brother came with wisdom* (or cleverness),[1] *and hath taken away thy blessing. And Esau said, Is he not rightly called Jacob?* which means a swindle, "because he swindled me first of my birthright, and now of my blessing." And he said, "Verily hast thou reserved a blessing for me?"

37–39 *And Isaac answered, and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants, and with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? and he lifted up his voice and wept.* Isaac then blessed him with "*The fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling.*"

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why did Isaac say, "I have already blessed thy brother, and I cannot bless thee also"? Is there but one blessing in the world? We see moreover that Isaac himself yet found a blessing for him. The reply is: Isaac said, "Such a blessing as Jacob's I cannot give thee, for I made him lord, and consequently his brethren must be his servants; therefore, O Esau, I can give thee no blessing."

When Esau said, "*Bless me, also me*," he meant to say, "Bless me also with the same blessing as Jacob," for he did not yet know the import of that blessing. Isaac informed him that he could not be equal with Jacob, because he had made Jacob to be his lord. Esau pleaded, "If I cannot be equal in this blessing; thou hast blessed him with corn and wine, '*Bless me, also me*,' with the same blessing." Isaac blessed him therefore: "*The fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling.*"

[1] מרמה, deceit, fraud, cunning, artfulness, in A.V. it is rendered "*subtilty;*" in the text "*Klugshaft*," prudence, wisdom, cleverness, wit, etc. As a rule, Jacob is all that is good, and Esau all that is bad. One is an angel, and the other a devil.

Esau further pleaded "Of what use to me will be the corn and wine, if I be a slave? for what a slave has belongs to his lord;[1] give me some independent ruling power." To this Isaac responded—

40 *And by thy sword shalt thou live,* and have dominion over Jacob if he does not keep the Torah (the Law).

Rabbi Israel says: Esau pleaded with Isaac "Give me corn and wine for myself, that I may serve Jacob with the same; for it is usual that the servant should give presents to his master, and therefore I wish to have corn and wine for myself, in order that it may be considered by Jacob as a present when I bring it to him." Isaac replied, "I have already given Jacob corn and wine, and he needs not thine, 'what shall I do now unto thee?'"

The Imrae Noam says: Abraham had a sword which he gave to Isaac, and Isaac gave it to Jacob. When Esau decided to have war with Nimrod, he sold his birthright to Jacob for that sword. Nowadays it is customary, when a business transaction is concluded, the parties drink a bottle of wine, paid for by the purchasers; at that time it was the custom (instead of drinking wine) to eat bread and lentils; these Jacob gave to Esau. When Esau said that Jacob had *taken away* his birthright, Isaac replied: "'*By thy sword shalt thou live,*' which thou hast accepted (in exchange) for the birthright."

41 *And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him.* The Chizkûni says: Because Esau received the blessing, "*By thy sword shalt thou live,*" he hated Jacob, and felt confident that with this sword he would be able to kill him.

*And Esau said, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob;* for whilst he is yet living I will not distress him (for he is my father). Thus Rashi. But the Chizkûni writes: Esau said thus "*The days of mourning for my father are at hand,* he will die and have no

[1] Vide *Gen. acc. to the Talmud,* 477, 20.

more children, so there will be none to take Jacob's part, then I will kill him."

42 *And these words were told to Rebekah*, by the Holy Ghost, that Esau was plotting to slay Jacob. She therefore bade him flee to her brother Laban, and hide himself there until she sent for him home again.

45 *Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?* For Esau having said, that on the very day that Isaac died he would kill Jacob, therefore Rebekah said, "Why should I be deprived of thee and of Isaac in one day?" Thus writes the Chizkûni.

But Rashi: Rebekah spake thus: "If he rises to kill thee, and thou (in self-defence) killest him,[1] then his children will rise and kill thee; and thus I shall be deprived of you both in one day." And in truth both eventually did die in one day.[2]

46 *And Rebekah said unto Isaac . . . If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth . . . what is life to me?* The Chizkûni writes: Rebekah said to Isaac, "Thou must forbid Jacob to take a wife from the daughters of Heth, for he hopes to take a wife from a great prince of the children of Heth, who would help him (to fight) against Esau."

CHAPTER XXVIII.—1–5 *And Isaac called Jacob* and said unto him, go to Laban and take a wife of his daughters, *and God Almighty bless thee! And Isaac sent Jacob away to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.* The Chizkûni asks: Why does the text tell us that she was the mother of Jacob and Esau, since we know this already? The explanation is: The text shows us how it was that Isaac and Rebekah, though both were pious, should have such a son as Esau. Laban, the text says, was Rebekah's brother, and most children resemble their

[1] והתורה אמרה בא להרגך השכם להרגו, *i.e.* The Law says: Anticipate him who seeks to slay thee. *Treasures of Talm.*, 230, 26.

[2] Vide *Talm. Misc.*, 288, 10.

maternal uncles,[1] therefore was she the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Another explanation is: Rebekah therefore sent away Jacob, that he should not kill Esau if Esau attempted to kill him; hence the text says, that Rebekah was "the mother of Jacob and Esau," and she had a mother's solicitude for them both.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac and the B'chai write: How is it that Rebekah was not afraid to send Jacob to so near a place as Padan-aram, for Esau might have pursued him thither? The text says: "*The mother of Jacob and Esau.*" Jacob is mentioned first, and it was well-known in Padan-aram that she loved Jacob more than Esau, and that therefore they would deliver him from Esau. * * * *

7 *Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and went to Padan-aram.* The B'chai asks: Since Isaac had ordered Jacob to go away, why was Jacob punished for it? for we find that Joseph was lost to Jacob for twenty-two years, and did not honour him (all that time), because Jacob tarried in Laban's house twenty-two years, and did not honour his parents (during that time). The explanation is this: Isaac had ordered Jacob to marry Leah, the eldest daughter of Laban, and not to remain long away; but Jacob was more pleased with Rachel, and on her account he tarried so long, therefore he was punished.

The Imrae Noam explains it thus: Jacob hid himself in the Beth-Hammidrash (Rabbinical school) of Shem and Eber fourteen years, until his brother's anger turned away from him. Rebekah sent Deborah after him, and she found him in the house of Laban, the first year; and yet he tarried twenty-two years. Therefore he was punished, by Joseph not honour-

[1] רוב בנים דומים לאחי האם, *Bava-Bathra*, fol. 110A. Esau resembled his uncle in wickedness, and Jacob resembled his mother in piety, and the two brothers represented their mother, who was a compound of good and bad—pious, but of a wicked family.

ing him also for twenty-two years, for God repays *measure for measure.*

END OF THE SIXTH SECTION.

10 *And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.* Rashi asks: What need was there to mention that he went out from Beer-sheba, since we know that he was in Beer-sheba? The answer is: The text shows us, that a pious man is the beauty and glory of the city where he resides; when he departs from it, the beauty and the glory of the city depart also.[1]

The Chizkûni writes: The reason why mention is made that he went out from Beer-sheba, is this. They used to impose there an oath on any one they would, and therefore was the city called Beer-sheba,[2] because all people there used to swear. Jacob, in order that they should not make him swear that he did not take away the blessings (from Esau) by deception, went out from Beer-sheba.

*And went toward Haran.* In one day he went from Beer-sheba to Haran. The sages say: It was seventeen day's journey but Jacob went (the whole distance) in twelve hours. Hence it is said:

11 *And he lighted upon the place.* He met the place, for the place came to meet him. The sages say: That the term "*And he lighted*" (in the original), means *Prayer;* and "*upon the place,*"[3] means *God,* that is to say: he prayed to God.

[1] It is not the place which confers honour upon the man, but it is the man who confers honour upon the place. *Taanith,* fol. 21A.

[2] In the original Hebrew, Beer-sheba means Well of an Oath. It means also a Well of Seven, or the Seventh Well, but the first meaning suited better the purpose of the Chizkûni.

[3] ויפגע במקום, *i.e.* "And he lighted upon a place." But פגע means also "to pray," for it is said (Jer. vii. 16) "Therefore pray," תפגע, "thou not for this people." *Berachoth,* fol. 26B, and *Taanith,* fol. 7B.

מקום, *i.e.* Place. In the Talmud, in the Liturgy, and in general Jewish

Our sages say also: When Jacob came to Haran he regretted having passed Mount Moriah without having prayed there; and as he began to retrace his steps, God brought Mount Moriah to meet him, that he should not have far to return.

*And he tarried there all night, because the sun was set.* Rashi asks: Why is it said first, "he tarried all night," and then it is said, "because the sun was set"? It ought to have stated the reverse; first, "the sun set," and then, "he tarried all night." The explanation is: The sun set before its time in order that he should tarry there all night.

Another explanation is: "He tarried there all night, because the sun was set" before its time, otherwise he would have travelled on in order to be at a greater distance from Esau. From this we learn that a man should not travel at night even in a case of necessity. As our sages say: Let a man ever go out when "*it was good*," and come in when "*it was good*;" that is: Let a man enter a city before the sun sets, and let him leave it after the sun rises. [1]

*And he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows.* Rashi asks: Here it is said, "And he took of *the stones*," and further on (ver. 18), "And he took *the stone*," which means *one* stone. The explanation is: Jacob took many stones and laid them as a wall round about him, that the wild beasts should do him no harm whilst asleep during the night; the stones then began to quarrel, each striving that the sleeping saint should have his head laid upon it, but God made

literature, God is often called מָקוֹם, *Makom*, "Place," because He is the space of the Universe, though the Universe does not constitute His space.

[1] This saying of the sages is based on (Gen. i. 4), "And God saw the light that it was good." The reason given by Rashi in *Taanith*, fol. 10B, that a man should travel by day and not by night, is to the effect that he would avoid falling into the hands of robbers, or into pits and ditches, and would not draw upon himself the suspicion of being a spy or a thief. He also escapes the danger of wild beasts and evil spirits that rove about at night. Then also Scripture says (Exod. xii. 22), "None of you shall go out of the door of his house *until the morning*." Vide *Bava-Kama*, fol. 60B.

peace between the stones and caused them all to become one stone.[1]

*And he lay down in that place.* Rashi observes: It is expressly stated in the text, "In *that* place," to show that only in that place he lay down to sleep; but all the fourteen years which he spent in the Beth-Hammidrash of Shem and Eber he did not lie down at night to sleep, but day and night he studied the Law.

12 *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to* heaven; and *behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.* Rashi asks: Since angels are in heaven, it ought to have been said first "descending," and then "ascending." The answer is: On that night Jacob was on the frontier of the Land of Israel, and those angels that accompanied him in the Holy Land were not permitted to escort him beyond the border into the outside land, so they were "ascending," and afterwards other angels were "descending" to accompany him in the outside land.[2] And God appeared unto Jacob and said:

13 *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.* The Baal Hatturim asks: Why is it said "thy father" of Abraham and not of Isaac? The Baal Hatturim gives no reply to the question, but Rabbi Israel gives answer thus: Jacob feared that the blessings of Isaac would not be fulfilled, because Isaac intended to bless Esau, but in wisdom he took them away. But God said unto Jacob, "Abraham is thy real father, for he would not bless Isaac because he knew that he would bless Esau." Therefore Abraham said, "Let God bless Isaac!" But Isaac had a mind to bless Esau and not Jacob, therefore says the text unto Jacob, "Abraham is thy father, but Isaac is unlike a father unto thee."

[1] In the Talmud this story is told somewhat differently. Vide *Chullin*, fol. 91B.

[2] The distinction between the Land of Israel and the outside land is noticed in *Treasures of the Talmud*, p. 279, 10.

Rashi asks: God said (in the text), "*The God of Isaac*," though God never attaches His name to that of a righteous man during his lifetime, lest he should become bad?[1] The answer is: Isaac was blind and confined to his house; he was a dead man, and his Yetzer-harah (propensity to evil) departed from him, therefore God attached His name to him though he was still alive.

*The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.* Rashi asks: What is there in such a gift as four ells of ground on which a man lies? The reply is: God folded up the whole Land of Israel and laid it underneath Jacob, showing him thereby that the whole land will as easily be conquered by his children as if it were a small piece of ground whereon he lay.

14 *And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth.* The B'chai asks: Why does he not say, "As the stars of heaven"? The answer is: This was to show that when Israelites are pious God exalts them to the stars of heaven, otherwise He sinks them to the dust, to be trod upon.

15 *That which I have spoken unto thee.* God said unto Jacob, "I will do that which I have spoken unto thee." Rashi asks: But we do not find that God had ever before spoken unto him; why does He say, "*that which I have spoken unto thee*"? The answer is: "Unto thee" means *respecting thee;* "for when I spoke to Abraham and said, 'For in Isaac shall thy seed be called,'[2] I meant *in* Isaac, but not *all* Isaac;[3] that is, a portion of Isaac will be called *thy* children; thy children, and not all the children of Isaac, will have the blessings I promised;" that is to say, Jacob will be blessed, but not Esau.

16, 17 *And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not;* for had I

[1] Rashi bases this on Job xv. 15, "Behold He putteth no trust in His saints."

[2] Chap. xxi. 12. [3] Comp. Rom. ix. 6–8.

known it I should not have slept in so holy a place. *And he was afraid, and said, This is the gate of heaven*, through which the prayers ascend.

18 *And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar* (as a monument), *and poured oil upon the top of it.*

20, 21 *And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go . . . then shall the Lord be my God.* The question is: Is it conceivable that Jacob should say, If God would be his help, he would hold him as a God; otherwise he would not hold Him for a God? The explanation is this: Jacob was afraid lest he, God forbid! should commit sin, and God would not fulfil His promises unto him; he therefore said, "If God will fulfil that which He has promised unto me, then will I worship Him *in this place;* if not, then I will worship Him, but *not in this place.*"

*And will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on.* Rashi asks: Where did God promise to give him bread? The answer is: God said (ver. 15), "*I will not forsake thee,*" that is, I will give thee bread; for he who has no bread is called *forsaken.*

Rabbi Israel asks: Where did God promise Jacob to give him raiment? To this question the Siphsey Khachamim[1] answers thus: When God promised to give him bread to eat, it is to be inferred that He would also give him raiment to put on, for otherwise he would be obliged to sell the bread for raiment and suffer want.

*If God will be with me . . . I will surely give unto thee the tenth of all that thou shalt give me.* And Jacob thus fulfilled it, for even of his children he gave the tenth, that is the tribe of Levi.[2]

CHAPTER XXIX.—2, 3 *And he looked, and behold a well*

[1] שִׂפְתֵי חֲכָמִים, *Siphsey Khachamim* is the title of a certain commentary of modern date, but much esteemed by orthodox Jews. The title in English is, *The Lips of the Sages.*

[2] Probably based on Deut. x. 8 = Num. iii. 12, 45.

*in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it . . . and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the herdsmen gathered; and rolled the stone from the well, and watered the sheep.*

5 *And Jacob said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?* The B'chai and the Chizkûni ask: Why does the text call him Laban the son of Nahor, when he was the son of Bethuel? The explanation is this: Bethuel was a bad man, and therefore did Laban call himself after Nahor, for a grandson is like a son; also because Nahor, was Abraham's brother, and all claimed the honour of being allied to Abraham's family. As they spoke,

6, 7 *Behold, Rachel his daughter came with the sheep.* And Jacob said to the herdsmen, "*Lo, it is yet high day;* it is not yet time to water the sheep. Are ye hired by the day? if so, the day is not yet out; but if these are your sheep, it is not yet time to gather them together, therefore *water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.*" Jacob said this, that the herdsmen might go away, in order that he should be able to have a talk with Rachel alone.

8, 9 *And the herdsmen said, We cannot water the sheep until all herdsmen gather together and we roll away the stone from the well. Meanwhile Rachel came very near the well with the sheep.* The Chizkûni writes: Leah did not go with the sheep because she had weak eyes, and the wind in the open field was injurious to her; also, she being the elder, Rachel did her honour by letting her sit at home. Thus writes the Ramban. Also, Laban sent Rachel because she was yet so very young and he had no fear of letting her go in the fields.

10 *When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth.* He did not roll the stone, but he *took it off* from the well, in order to show Rachel his great strength. The herdsmen were obliged to unite their strength and *roll* the stone from the

well's mouth, for they could not lift it on account of its great weight, and therefore it is said of them, "And they *rolled* the stone;"[1] but of Jacob it is said, "And he uncovered[2] the stone from the well," as one uncovers a lid from a glass.

The B'chai says: The reason that it is repeated in the text three times, "*his mother's brother*," is to show that he took away the stone *because* he (Laban) was his mother's brother.[3]

11 *And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept*, because he prophetically foresaw that she would not be buried with him in the cave of Machpelah; also because he had no present to give her. He said, "Eliezer, the *servant* of Abraham, gave beautiful presents to Rebekah, and *I* (Abraham's grandson) have nothing to give." It may be asked: How is it conceivable that Rebekah should send Jacob away with nothing? But it is thus explained: Rebekah indeed gave him many presents to take with him, but Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by the order of his father, pursued after him to kill him, and when he overtook him on the road, Jacob said unto him, "Take all I have and I shall then be counted as dead,[4] and thou wilt be able to tell thy father that thou hast killed me."

12 *And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother*, "and therefore I kissed thee," said he, "because thou art my near relation." Rashi remarks: Jacob said thus, "If thy father be a deceiver, then I am his brother (his equal), for I too can deceive; and if he be pious, then I am the son of Rebekah, and she is pious."[5]

[1] וגללן, from the root גלל, "to roll off, roll away."

[2] ויגל, from the root גלה, "to uncover, to lay bare, to reveal."

[3] Otherwise he would not have done it.

[4] עניות כמיתה, Poverty is as death. *Nedarim*, fol. 7B. See also *Tal. Misc.*, 71, 14.

[5] In the Talmud this passage is thus commented on: Was he then her father's brother? Was he not the son of her father's sister? (Reply) He had asked her to marry him. She assented, but added: "Yet my father is a deceiver, and thou art no match for him." He replied: אחיו אנא ברמאות, "I am his brother (his equal) in artful deception." She said unto

*And she ran and told her father.* Rachel told her father, and Rebekah told her mother when Eliezer came to fetch her to Isaac; but Rachel's mother was dead.

The Chizkûni says: Because Jacob said he was "*her father's brother*," therefore Rachel told her father, "Thy relation is come." But Rebekah told her mother, because Eliezer did not say by what family he was sent, therefore she told her mother, for maidens tell all things to their mother; also because Eliezer gave her pretty ornaments, therefore she told her mother.

13 *And Laban ran to meet him*, for he reasoned with himself thus: Eliezer, the *servant* of Abraham, had ten camel loads with him; therefore Jacob, being himself one of the fathers, must of course have a deal of money with him. As he saw no camels, he thought that he must have much money about him, he therefore *embraced him* to ascertain what he had on his person; finding that he had nothing, *he kissed him*, to discover whether he had not hidden a valuable diamond in his mouth.

*And Jacob told Laban all these things*—that he fled from Esau, and therefore he had brought nothing with him. The Chizkûni says: He related how he took away the birthright and the blessing from Esau, in order to induce Laban to give him his daughter.

14 *And Laban said unto him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.* "I ought not to have taken thee into the house, because thou hast no money; but as thou art my relative, abide with me a month." And also that month was not for nothing, for he kept his sheep.

The Chizkûni observes: Laban said to Jacob, "I ought not to have taken thee into the house, because thou art a cheat, as thou hast duped thy brother Esau of his birthright and of his

him: "Is it permissible for righteous men to go about with deception?" "Yes," said he; "with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury," etc. (2 Sam. xxii. 27). *Meggillah*, fol. 13B.

blessing; but thou art my blood and my flesh, that is to say, I also am a cheat, and thou wilt therefore be unable to play a trick upon me."

*And Jacob abode with him a month*, for Laban would not hire him until he knew what he was.

The Imrae Noam asks: How is it that Jacob entered the house of Laban, which contained idols; whereas Abraham's camels even would not enter the house of Bethuel until the idols were removed from it? The reply is: Jacob wished to know whether or not Rachel and Leah worshipped idols, and this he ascertained in a month, after which he separated himself from the house, and hence it is stated: "*And he abode with him the space of a month*" only.

15 *And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought?* The Toldoth Yitzkhac remarks: Laban was an artful cheat, and he thought, if Jacob served him for nought he would then be legally free from paying damages, as a keeper[1] without wages; he preferred to pay him, in order that he should be obliged to make good any loss. Therefore said Laban to Jacob, "*Tell me, what shall thy wages be?*"

17 *Leah was tender-eyed*, because she wept much. She heard people say, "Leah, being the eldest daughter of Laban, will marry Esau, the eldest son of Rebekah; and Rachel, being the youngest daughter, will marry Jacob, the youngest son of Rebekah," and therefore Leah wept very much, and got bad eyes in consequence.[2] So says Rashi.

[1] Keeper: in this instance "keeper" of Laban's flocks. It is a Jewish legal maxim, that one who has charge of (a "keeper" of) anything for another, and is not paid for his service, is not responsible for its loss; but the receipt of even a small payment renders the "keeper" responsible. Hence it is agreed that Laban's offer of wages was dictated by a selfish motive, to hold Jacob legally answerable for his flocks. The Hebrew technical expressions שומר חנם, שומר שכיר (a gratuitous keeper and a paid keeper), are very common in Hebrew. See also Exod. xxii. 6–14.

[2] In *Bava-Bathra*, fol. 123A, we are told; Leah, when she heard,

The Debek Tov remarks: Rashi wonders how it is that Scripture should expose the defect of Leah? Rashi explains: Scripture informs us that Leah was a most pious woman, and she wept her eyes sore, so that she should not fall to the lot of Esau the wicked.

Rabbi Israel writes: The Talmud says: A bride that has pretty eyes, her whole body requires no further examination for any deformity; but if she has bad eyes, her whole body requires examination lest she has yet some other blemish.[1] Hence Jacob reasoned thus: "My parents commanded me to marry a wife of the daughters of Laban, and that command I must obey. Had there been but one daughter, though deformed, I should have been bound to marry her; but now there is Rachel, who has no deformity whatever, why should I marry Leah with a deformity?" Hence Jacob said unto Laban:

18 *I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.* Rashi remarks: Jacob was therefore obliged thus to stipulate with Laban. Though we are already aware that Rachel was his younger daughter, Jacob knew that Laban was a cunning cheat, and therefore he thought, if I tell him "I will serve thee for Rachel," he will take a strange girl of the name of Rachel and give her to me. Hence he was particular to say "*thy daughter.*" He was also afraid that Laban would change Leah's name into Rachel, therefore he said, "thy *younger* daughter." But all this careful stipulation did not help him, for after all he gave him Leah.

The Chizkûni says: Jacob declared, "I will marry Rachel, because she is the younger; for if I marry Leah, then Esau will

גדולה לגדול וקטנה לקטן, *i. e.* "*The elder for the elder, and the younger for the younger,*" sat on the cross ways and inquired of the passers by the character of Esau, and she was told that he was a wicked highwayman, and Jacob was an upright man, dwelling in tents (chap. xxv. 27). She then wept till her eyelashes fell off.

[1] Vide *Taanith*, fol. 24A "משל לכלה כל זמן שעיניה יפות וכ.

say that I took away from him the birthright and the blessing, and now I take away also his wife, which belongs to him as he is the elder."

The Chizkûni writes also: Jacob said that he would serve him seven years for Rachel, for he was afraid that for less than seven years he would not give him so handsome a woman.

19, 20 *It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another . . . And the seven years seemed unto him but a few days, for he much loved her.* It is asked: When one loves a woman, the days and hours are usually long, and he is anxious the time should pass away that he should marry her; and why were these seven long years as but a few days to Jacob? The answer is: This was after the seven years had passed that they seemed to him as seven days, because he loved her so much.

21 *Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.* Rashi asks: Why did Jacob say so plainly, "Let me *go in unto her*," since even the lowest bred man would not utter so coarse an expression? The reply is: Jacob had said, "I am already *eighty-four years* old, and as I must needs have *twelve* children, it is time that I should take a wife," therefore he said plainly, "Let me come in unto her," for he had no other intention but the procreation of children.[1]

The Ramban asks: Why did Jacob say, "The days for which my mother had sent me away are already fulfilled, therefore give me Rachel, though the seven years are not yet completed"? What had that to do with Laban, if the days of Jacob's mother were fulfilled? Hence says the Ramban: The meaning of "For my days are fulfilled," is to be explained thus: When the seventh year began, Jacob said to Laban, "Thou mayest now give me Rachel, for surely I will be with her and not run away

[1] Procreation is of the first consideration with the orthodox Jew. Of the 613 precepts of the Law, פרו ורבו, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. i. 28), stands first on the list, and it is of the highest importance. See *Gen. acc. to the Talmud*, 69, 7.

for one whole year." Therefore he said, "*I will come in unto her*," that is to say, "I will take her for a wife, so to be sure that I will not run away."

22 *And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.* And he said unto them, "Promise me that ye will not tell Jacob that I will give him Leah to-night." They promised him. Laban then urged them to give him pledges that they would keep their promise, and they gave him their garments as pledges. These Laban pledged for wine, with which he treated them at their own cost. They became very merry, and sung all night *Hilulu*.[1] And thereby they intimated to Jacob that that was Leah; for *Hilulu* consists of two words, signifying "*This is Leah.*" But Jacob did not understand it.

23, 24 *And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah unto his daughter Leah for a handmaid*, in order to lead Jacob to think that, seeing Zilpah in the tent, and she being younger than Bilhah, as Rachel was younger than Leah, and the elder servant naturally belongs to the elder daughter, and the younger to the younger, it was certain that Rachel was given him. But,

25 *It came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah.* It was in the morning that Jacob recognised that it was Leah; though he spoke with her all night, he did not recognise her. Jacob had given Rachel certain signs of recognition; but when she saw that Leah was being led to him, to save her sister from exposure, she committed these signs of recognition to her. Hence Jacob thought all night that Leah was Rachel, and it was only in the morning that he discovered the difference.

The B'chai says: God rewards *measure for measure.* Jacob sent presents to Rachel, as it is the custom for a bridegroom

[1] Something similar in sound to Hilula-lu-lu-lu as usually sung by women at night at an Eastern wedding. But Europeans do not understand it; to them it is a noise without meaning; but it may probably be to perpetuate the memory of the eventful marriage of Jacob and Leah.

to send presents to the bride before the wedding. The presents Laban took and gave to Leah, and Rachel did not report it to Jacob. As a reward, she was the ancestress of Benjamin, who did not report against the brethren who sold Joseph. Benjamin was the ancestor of Saul,[1] who also did not tell that Samuel had anointed him king,[2] for no one knew it. From Saul descended Queen Esther, who also did not say from what people she was,[3] and by this means came the deliverance of Purim.

*And he said unto Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me?* I have served thee for Rachel, and thou hast given me Leah.

26, 27 *And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give in marriage the younger before the elder.* If thou wilt have Rachel also, let the wedding week pass, and I will give thee also Rachel, in order that one merriment should not interfere with another.

30 *And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah.* The Ramban observes: It is usual to love the first wife more than the other wives; and as Jacob married Leah first, why did he love Rachel more? The answer is: Because Leah wronged her sister and deceived him. For although she was bound to obey her father and go in to Jacob, yet she ought to have told him that she was Leah. But she practised deception in making believe she was Rachel. Hence Jacob hated her, and wanted to divorce her; but God, knowing that her intention was good, in desiring to unite herself to a righteous man, had compassion on her, and at once gave her children, and hence says the text:

31 *And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb.* He gave her children in order that Jacob should love her. The B'chai and the Ramban say: Jacob did not hate Leah; but compared to the love he had for Rachel, his feelings for Leah were like those of hatred.

[1] 1 Sam. ix. 1, 2. [2] *Ibid.* x. 16. [3] Esther ii. 5, 7, 10.

30 *And he served with him yet seven other years.* The text teaches us the righteousness of Jacob. Although he served the first seven years for Rachel, and Laban cheated him and gave him Leah, yet he served the last seven years with a much faithfulness as the first.

32 *And Leah conceived and bare a son.* The B'chai observes It is therefore stated: "She conceived and bare," to show that soon after she had conceived she gave birth. * * * When Leah had had her third son, she said:

34 *Now this time will my husband be joined unto me;* for she prophetically foresaw that Jacob would beget twelve children, and as he had four wives, each would have three children. Leah therefore said: "I have already begotten my share of children, and '*now this time will my husband* be joined unto me,'" and she called her third son Levi, which means *to join*. So write both Rashi and Chizkûni; but the Toldoth Yitzkhac says: When a woman has two children she carries one on each arm, but when she gets a third child the husband must carry it, and hence said Leah, "*Now this time will my husband be joined unto me,*" in carrying the third child.

Rashi says: Although it is said of Levi, as it is said of all the tribes, "Therefore was his name called," yet he had not many children for all that, because he did no work in Egypt (as the other tribes); for Jacob having given no orders that the Levites should carry his coffin, the Egyptians supposed them to be holy, and did not therefore force them to labour, and hence the Levites were not included in the blessing, "The more they afflicted them, *the more they multiplied and grew,*"[1] *i.e.* they had not the blessing of many children.

*He called*[2] *his name Levi.* Of all the other children it is said, "*She called* his name." This was because God sent Gabriel to bring before Him the child, and "*He* called his name Levi," because He joined him to the twenty-four gifts

[1] Exod. i. 12.

[2] קרא, *he called*, masc. past, third pers. sing.

of the priesthood, and also other gifts of the priesthood—sacrifices and offerings—which should be given him.

35 *Now will I praise the Lord.* When Leah had the fourth son she said "*Now will I praise the Lord,* because I have more children than my share." Therefore she called his name Judah, which means *Praise.*

CHAPTER XXX.—1 *And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac explains the reason why Rachel was envious of her sister when she had her fourth son, and not before. Because when Leah had three children only, she thought that her share would also be three children, for all the four wives were to have three children each; but when Leah had a fourth son, and therefore a larger share, she envied her.

Rashi says: She was not envious because Leah had many children, for it is not to be thought that such a pious woman as she was should be envious for such a cause; but she was envious of her good works, as she thought her to be very pious, and this kind of envy is permissible.[1]

*And she said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.* She said to him, "Thy father Isaac prayed on behalf of Rebekah, that she should have children. Do thou also pray for me." From this we learn that whoever has no children is like a dead man.[2]

2 *And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee to have children?* My father prayed on behalf of Rebekah because he had no children by another wife, but I have children by Leah. The Ramban asks: How is it conceivable that Jacob should so answer, viz. that because he had children by Leah he would therefore not pray for Rachel? The pious pray even for the wives of others that they should have children, as, for instance,

[1] "Zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14). "A zeal not according to knowledge" (Rom. x. 2).

[2] *Nedarim,* fol. 64B.

Elijah and Elisha prayed on behalf of other men's wives,[1] how much stranger is it that Jacob should not pray for his own beloved wife? Furthermore, it is difficult to comprehend why Jacob was angry with Rachel. She had but asked for a proper thing, and she thought that God accepts the prayers of the righteous.

The Midrash also says: That God told Jacob, "Thou didst not well reply to Rachel; therefore thy children will be obliged to bow down to her son Joseph."

Another explanation is: Rachel, knowing that Jacob loved her very much, had threatened him that she would die of grief if she had no children, in order that he should put on sackcloth, and fast and pray to God on her behalf, and hence his anger against her for threatening him; and he remonstrated, saying, "*Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee to have children?*" But Rachel argued thus: "Thy grandfather Abraham, though he had children by Hagar, yet prayed for Sarah, that she also might have children." Jacob retorted: "My grandmother Sarah herself gave her maidservant unto Abraham."

3 *And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.* Rashi and the B'chai write: Rachel said, "There is the letter *He* in the name of Leah, but not in mine.[2] This letter *He* occurs in the name Jehovah, and therefore Leah (having the same letter *He* in her name) has children and I have none. I will give thee therefore my maid Bilhah, in whose name there are *two He's;* one *He* will have the effect of giving her children, and the other *He* will cause me to have children."

5 *And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.* The Ramban remarks: It is said, "*Bare Jacob a son,*" to show that though Bilhah and Zilpah were but servants, yet Jacob loved their children, and called them his sons.

*Rachel called him Dan.* Bilhah then conceived again and

[1] 1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 17, 33.

[2] The spelling of Rachel in Hebrew is without the letter *He*, רָחֵל.

bare a second son, and Rachel called him Naphtali. And when Leah saw that Rachel gave her maid to Jacob, she also gave her maid to him. The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Since Leah had children enough, why did she give her maid to Jacob? The answer is: Rachel gave her maid to Jacob that she might bear children, and for the sake of this Rachel hoped that she herself would have children; hence says the text (ver. 3), "*And shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.*" But of Leah it is said:

9 *She took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife*, and it is not said: "And she shall bear upon my knees," that is, that the *maid* shall have children; but she wished that she herself should have more children. Hence, when she saw that Zilpah had a son, she was angry, and said: "I did not mean to have children by the maid, but that I myself should have children. Evidently God did not regard me, and this child was born by mere *Luck*,"[1] and hence she called him Gad, which means *Mazal*, i.e. *Luck*. And when Leah had the sixth son, she called him Zebulun, which means a Lodging, for "because I had six children, my husband will therefore make his lodgings with me." And because Leah had said that the son of the maid came by Luck, and not from God, she was punished by God, in giving her a bad daughter. Leah, however, said: "Blessed be the true Judge!" and she called her Dinah.[2]

10 *And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son.* The reason why it is not said she conceived is, because she was very young, and it is not noticed that she was pregnant. Laban, the cheat, gave her to Leah on her marriage with Jacob, in order to deceive Jacob, by inferring from Zilpah's being in the tent that Rachel and not Leah was with him.[3]

[1] מזל, *i.e.* Luck, or astral influence.

[2] דינה, *i.e.* Judgment. It is customary to this day, when one hears bad news, to say, ברוך דיין האמת, *i.e.* Blessed be the true Judge!

[3] *Vide* chap. xxix. 23, *ante*.

14 *And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field,*[1] *and brought them unto his mother.* The Ramban and the B'chai say: It was such an herb that it had a beautiful scent, and excited man's desire, and also caused (barren) women to have children if they put it into the bed. *Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes,* for she longed to have children. Leah became cross.

15 *And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wilt thou now take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.* "He was to be with me to-night, but in payment for the mandrakes I yield him up to thee." And because Rachel so contemptuously sold the privilege of lying with the pious saint, she was not counted worthy to lie with him in the cave of Machpelah.

16 *And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.* And she had a son, whom she called Issachar, that is to say, "God hath given me my hire, because I have hired Jacob." And afterwards she yet bare another son, whom she called Zebulun, which means *Lodging,* for "because I have more children than all the wives, my husband will have his lodgings with me."

21 *And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.* The Chizkûni observes: It is therefore not said that she conceived Dinah, because Dinah was the twin sister of Zebulun. Another explanation is: Leah had conceived a son, but she prayed that Rachel might have that son. God heard that prayer, and turned the embryo into a female. Therefore it is said, "She bare a daughter"—but she conceived a son—and she called her Dinah, which means judgment,

[1] According to Jewish chronology, by Rabbi David Ganz, Reuben was three, or at the most four, years old when he found the mandrakes.

because Leah judged (and condemned) herself to have a daughter.

22 *And God remembered Rachel.* He remembered her kindness to Leah, in giving her the signs of recognition which Jacob gave her; He remembered her tears; for, being childless, she wept for fear that Jacob would divorce her in consequence and Esau would take her. All this God remembered, and gave her a son, and she said:

23 *God hath taken away my reproach,* what people used to say, that Jacob would divorce me, and that Esau would take me. Hence she called him Joseph, which means, "Taken away."

Another explanation is: When a woman has a child she is able to lay all the reproaches due to her, upon the child. Who broke the glass? The child! Who ate up the figs? The child! Thus all reproach is taken from her.

* * * * When Rachel had no children, people said that Jacob gave her drugs to drink; hence, when she had a son, she said, "*God hath taken away my reproach.*"

24 *The Lord shall add to me another son.* Rashi remarks: She prayed for no more than one other son, because she prophetically saw that Jacob would have twelve sons, and as there were already eleven born, and only one more wanting, she prayed that that one might be of her.

25 *And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph.* Joseph was an accuser against Esau, and therefore Jacob was no more afraid of Esau, and wished to return home.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac remarks: Joseph was more than all his brethren an accuser against Esau, because he will be able, in the day of judgment, to ask Esau, "Why hast thou done evil against thy brother Jacob?" If he should answer: "Jacob has done me evil, he took away my birthright and my blessing;" then Joseph will retort: "My brothers have also done me evil; they sold me, and I did them good in return." The rest of the brethren will not be able to ask Esau, in the day of

judgment, why he did evil to his brother, because they themselves did evil to their brother, and sold him into slavery.

26 *Give me my wives and my children.* Jacob said to Laban, "I will not go away without thy permission; therefore, give me my wives and my children and let me go home."

27 *And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have founa favour in thine eyes, tarry here; for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.* For ere thou camest I had no sons, and was obliged to send a daughter into the field with the sheep; but after thou camest, I have begotten sons.

The Chizkûni asks: Whence is it inferred that Laban had no sons before? Perhaps he had sons, but they were too young, and therefore he was obliged to send his daughter. Rabbi Israel answers: Had he had sons, though ever so young, he would not have sent a daughter into the field, he would have sent Bilhah or Zilpah; but because he had no sons, and his daughters would be his heirs, he sent a daughter, as she would be sure to tend the sheep faithfully, being her interest to do so; and did not send Bilhah or Zilpah, because, being the children of concubines, and disqualified from being heirs, they would not be faithful in tending the flocks.

28 *And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it;* only remain here. The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: Laban had more daughters, and he proposed, "One female more shall be thy wages,[1] only serve me." But Jacob replied, "I have now wives enough."

30 *The Lord hath blessed thee since my coming.* Jacob said to Laban, "I have served thee honestly, and God blessed thee for my sake."

31 *And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me anything,* for my past service; for my past service was for the women. But if thou wilt retain me in

[1] נְקֹבָה שְׂכָרְךָ. The verb which means "fix" or "appoint," by altering its vowel points thus נְקֵבָה, means "*female.*"

thy service, thou must go with me through thy flock, and remove from thence all the speckled and spotted, and of such shall in future be my hire; and if thou find among my sheep, or the goats, any that are not speckled or spotted, and brown among the sheep, *that shall be counted stolen with me.*

35 *And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted.* The Ramban observes: That Laban was a great cheat; for Jacob stipulated with him to remove only the speckled and spotted from the goats, and Laban did so also from the he goats, and that even those which were spotted with white or had a little white on their feet.

36 *And he set three days' journey between himself and Jacob,* in order that the sheep remaining with Jacob should not become speckled and spotted. On account of this cunning trick, Jacob the Righteous was obliged to do a little trick in return.[1]

37–39 *And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled and spotted.* * * * *

40 *And Jacob separated the lambs* that were born spotted, and set them before the sheep, that they should gaze upon them and conceive spotted sheep.

41 *The stronger cattle* (females), which lust after the males, Jacob operated upon with the pilled rods, that they might give birth to *strong cattle*; but—

42 *When the cattle were feeble,* he put them (the rods) not in, so the feeble were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

43 *And he had much cattle.* The blessing was with Jacob and *his sheep,* more than with the other sheep (which were

[1] *Vide* chap. xxix. 12, *ante.*

Laban's), and from his sheep he came to have many asses, and camels, and menservants and maidservants.

CHAPTER XXXI.—1–7 *And Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying,* "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's *hath he gotten all his glory.*" And God appeared unto Jacob, and said unto him: "Go to thy land, and I will be with thee." And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, and said unto them, "Ye know that with all my power I served your father, and he deceived me ten times; but God hath helped me."

8 *If he said thus.*[1] The Ramban and the Toldoth Yitzkhac ask: Why is this passage in the future and not in the past tense? The answer is: Laban was a great cheat, and knew whatever stipulations he might make with Jacob, God would favour Jacob; hence, before the sheep conceived he stipulated that the spotted should be Jacob's wages, and he thought that God, of course, for Jacob's sake will cause all to be spotted; but he calculated that when the sheep conceived, he would then alter the stipulation, so that the spotted should belong to him. But God knew what Laban's second thoughts *would be,* and therefore the passage is in the future tense. "If he *shall* say thus," that is to say: The sheep were just what Laban had in his mind afterwards to say that they should be.

Jacob said to Laban: "Thou shalt not give me anything."[2] "Thou shalt not give me a thing which is nothing, that is to say, a thing that can be numbered, for there is no blessing in it; but give me such a thing which cannot be counted, namely, I will go through thy flock, and do thou remove from thence all the speckled sheep, and those that shall be born speckled shall be my hire." The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: That Jacob spoke to Laban thus: "Thou wilt not give me that which thou

[1] In the original it is: אם כה יאמר, in the future tense, *i.e.* "*If he will,* or *shall say thus.*" The past tense would be אם כה אמר, *i.e.* "*If he said thus.*"

[2] Chap. xxx. 31, *ante.*

wilt promise, therefore let me keep thy cattle, so that I will have them in my own hand."

10 *And saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the sheep were speckled and spotted.* Although Laban removed all the speckled and spotted from the flock, that the sheep should not give birth to such, yet the angel brought them back from the herd of Laban to the herd of Jacob.

11–13 *And the angel of God spake unto me . . . and said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the sheep are speckled and spotted, for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel . . . now arise and return to the land of thy nativity.* The B'chai asks: Why did the angel order Jacob to look how the rams leaped on the sheep? The Gemara forbids to gaze on such occasions.[1] The answer is: Because it was a dream. * * * *

14 *And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?* He has sons.

15 *And he hath quite devoured our money.* He swallowed our dowry even. But all that which God separated from our father's property is ours; therefore, that which God bids thee, do.

17 *Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels.* His sons first, and afterwards his wives. The Chizkûni asks: Why is it said in Exodus of Moses, that he took first his wife and then his children,[2] and of Jacob the reverse is said, first the children and then the wives? The answer is: The children of Moses were too young to ride alone, and hence the mother had to be set on the ass first, and then she received the children on her lap; but the sons of Jacob were big enough to ride by themselves on camels, and hence he set upon the camels, first his sons and his wives afterwards.

Another explanation is: Because Jacob ran away from Laban, and he feared if Laban pursued him, and overtook the

[1] See *Gen. acc. to the Tal.*, p. 57, 23. [2] Exod. iv. 20.

runaway party, he would kill those in the rear; and in the hope that Laban would have more compassion on his daughters than on his grandchildren, he left the women in the rear; also, should Laban's retainers begin to kill, let them *rather kill the women.* But Moses went towards the enemy, for he had many enemies in Egypt, hence he placed the women in front, that the enemy should first meet them.[1]

19 *And Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's,* in order to wean him from idolatry. So say Rashi and the Chizkûni; but the Toldoth Yitzkhac says: She stole the images in order that they should not reveal that Jacob ran away, and also that Laban should say that they were no gods, since they allowed themselves to be stolen.

Rabbi Abraham writes: Rachel did not hide the images in Laban's house, because there were so many menservants and maidservants, and eleven children about, and she feared that she would be observed.

22 *And it was told Laban on the third day, that Jacob was fled.* Because Jacob was now at a distance of three days' journey (Laban made an extra effort),

23 *And pursued after them seven days' journey;* for the messengers had to travel three days to report Jacob's flight, and meanwhile Jacob travelled three days, and thus the distance between them was six days, and on the seventh day Laban caught Jacob. From this we learn, that the journey which Jacob travelled in seven days Laban travelled in *one* day.

The Chizkûni observes: Laban went quickly, as it is the manner of robbers to travel quickly; but Jacob, having much wealth, many cattle, and a large household, was obliged to travel very slowly.

24 *And God came to Laban in a dream by night, and said unto him: Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or*

[1] The meaning of this is, that in time of danger women are to be exposed first, and then children; for if one woman dies there are many others to be had, but one is not so sure of having more children.

*bad.* Rashi observes: He was not to speak even *good*, for the good of the wicked is evil to the righteous.[1] Laban said unto Jacob:

27 *Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, and with harp?*

28 *Why hast thou not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters?*

29 *It is in the power of my hand to do you evil, but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight*, that I should do you no evil. The Chizkûni says: Laban argued, "If God had to warn me that I should do you no evil, you can easily infer that I have the power to do you harm."

30, 32 *Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? And Jacob answered . . . With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live.* Rashi remarks: On account of his curse—"*Let him not live*"—Rachel died on the road;[2] but Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33 *And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents, but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.* Laban first entered the tent of Jacob, which was the tent of Rachel, for he principally made his abode with her,—hence Laban searched her tent first; afterwards he went into the tents of Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah; but when he went out of the tent of Leah, he went once more into that of Rachel, because he suspected her. He, however, found nothing in any of the tents.

34, 35 *Rachel had taken the images and hid them in the camel's saddle and sat upon them . . . And she said unto her father, I cannot rise before thee, for I have the time of impurity upon me.* The Ramban asks: Is it then true that when

[1] *Yevamoth*, fol. 103A.

[2] The curse of a wise man comes to pass even when it is causeless. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 90B.

a woman has her time of impurity that she cannot rise? The answer is: Women who, like Rachel, have no children, are generally more weak than other women at such times, hence she said, "*I cannot rise before thee*," because I am weak.

The Ramban, and also the B'chai, write: As soon as Rachel told her father that she was a Niddah, he left her; for in ancient times they used to keep aloof from a Niddah, and did not even speak with her. The Gemara says also: One should not tread on her footsteps.[1]

36-39 *And Jacob was wroth and quarrelled with Laban, and said unto him, What hast thou found of all thy household stuff?* Twenty years have I served thee, fourteen for thy two daughters and six for thy sheep. Thy ewes and thy goats have not cast their young. That which was torn by a lion or a wolf, I brought not unto thee, but I paid thee for it.

41 *And thou hast changed my wages ten times.* I have hired myself out for six years on the condition to receive the speckled sheep. The first year none of the kind were born. Those born during the five years, twice a year, thou hast each time, that is ten times, altered the stipulations and my wages.

The Ramban asks: Jacob himself having ordered that search should be made, why was he then afterwards angry about it? The answer is: Jacob thought that perhaps one of his sons, or one of his wives, might have taken the images; but as soon as he saw that nothing was found, he became angry with Laban, and said unto him: "Thou camest to bring a *false accusation!*" But Laban said:

43 *These daughters are my daughters, and these sons are my sons.* The B'chai, on behalf of our Rabbi Channanel, says: Laban told a lie when he said, "These sons are my sons;" for our sages say that only the grandchildren of a son are the grandfather's, but not the grandchildren of a daughter. Also when he said, "*These cattle are my cattle*," did Laban tell a lie; for Jacob honestly gained them.

[1] I cannot find this passage in the Gemara.

45 *And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.*

48 *And Laban said, This heap is a witness between us,* that one should not injure the other.

CHAPTER XXXII.—1, 2 *And the angels of God met him, and Jacob called the name of that place, Mahanaim,* which means a duality of hosts, for he saw there *two* hosts of angels,—the angels of the outside land, which escorted him to the frontiers of the Holy Land; and the angels of the Land of Israel, who came to accompany him in the Land of Israel.

END OF THE SEVENTH SECTION.

3 *And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother.* The B'chai says: These messengers[1] were real angels, for it is said (ver. 6), "And the messengers *returned*," and it is not said how they went to Esau; for because they were angels, and flew unto Esau, they soon returned to Jacob.

Rabbi Israel says: From this we know that they were real angels, for it is said:

4 *Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau.* And why did Jacob show him such respect in his absence, but because *the Prince of Esau*[2] was also amongst the angels, and he therefore called him "lord," for fear lest *the Prince* might do him an injury?

*I have sojourned with Laban.* He sent to say to Esau: "Thou hast no cause to hate me, for the blessings of my father were not fulfilled; he blessed me to be '*a lord*,' but '*I have sojourned with Laban*' as a slave and not as a lord."

The reason why he said "*I have sojourned*,"[3] is because "I have sojourned" (in the original) has the numerical value of 613. Jacob thus intimated to Esau: "Do not think that

[1] מלאכים, *Malachim*, means angels, or human messengers.

[2] All the nations have their respective angels in heaven, which are called Princes. Esau, a nation by anticipation at the time alluded to in the text, had his angel, a real angel. Compare Dan. x. 20, 21.

[3] גרתי = 613. See List of Numerals, p. xii.

because '*I sojourned with Laban*,' I have not kept the Law, and thou wilt consequently vanquish me, because my father said: 'If Jacob does not keep the Torah, thou shalt have dominion over him,'[1]—I therefore tell thee that I have kept all the 613 Precepts."[2]

5 *And I have oxen and asses, and sheep, and menservants, and maidservants*, and the blessing of my father, "The dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth," is by no means fulfilled in me, for what I have is neither from heaven nor of the earth.

The B'chai observes: Jacob first mentions oxen and asses, and last he mentions sheep; whereas of Abraham and Isaac sheep are mentioned first, because sheep are the best (most profitable) cattle. The explanation is this: Jacob did not like to mention sheep first to Esau, because by means of the sheep skins, which disguised his neck and arms, he obtained by deception the blessing of Isaac, and therefore he did not mention them first. Hence when Esau had made peace with him, Jacob subsequently mentions first sheep, and then oxen and asses.

The Midrash says: Jacob therefore mentions *oxen*, in order to give Esau a hint that Joseph, who is called bullock,[3] is an accuser unto him, thus showing Esau that he is not afraid of him, because he has Joseph for his help.

6 *We came to thy brother, Esau.* Rashi says: The angels said unto Jacob, "Thou hast said that he is thy brother; but he is *Esau*, he is still persevering in his hatred."

*And also he cometh to meet thee*, and wage war against thee. The B'chai says: The term "*and also*" means that also the

[1] *Vide* xxviii. 40, *ante*.

[2] Among the seven things that were created before the world, was the Law, which consists of 613 Precepts, which, long before they were given on Mount Sinai, were kept by Jacob, but not by Esau. Comp. Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.

[3] Deut. xxxiii. 17.

angel of Esau went with him to assist him against Jacob, *and four hundred men were with him.*

7 *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.* He was afraid lest they should kill him, and was distressed lest he himself should kill another.[1] So says Rashi; but the B'chai and the Chizkûni say—

*And Jacob was greatly afraid of Esau and distressed*, on account of the Prince of Esau. Although Jacob had angels with him, yet he was afraid, because of the angels, were *Michael* on the one hand, and *Sammael*, the Prince of Esau, on the other, and Sammael he greatly feared.[2]

The Eben Shoab and the Toldoth Yitzkhac say: *Jacob was greatly afraid*, lest they should kill him; and *distressed*, for he inferred that his father was dead, for Esau had said, after the mourning for my father I will kill my brother;[3] and he felt distressed because he had not honoured his father.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Why is it said, Jacob *greatly* feared, and why is it not said also, *greatly* distressed? The answer is: Had he had to kill another, it would have been no sin, as the Gemara says: "Anticipate him who seeks to slay thee." He *greatly* feared to be killed, but was distressed not *greatly*, to kill others.

8 *Then the other company which is left shall escape.* Jacob divided his people into two companies, and said, "If Esau comes upon one company and slaughters it, his people will then be too tired to attack the second company, which will be fresh to defend itself against them." So writes the Toldoth Yitzkhac.

[1] On the principle which is quite proverbial among the Jews, הבא להרגך השכם להרגו, *i.e.* anticipate him who seeks to kill thee. *Vide* xxvii. 45, *ante*.

[2] A word or two about Sammael, סמאל, the patron and Prince of Esau. He is believed to be the ראש כל השטנים, the chieftain of all the devils. We shall meet with this Prince of darkness again. See p. 132, *ante*.

[3] Chap. xxvii. 41.

From this section we learn the same thing which the Gemara teaches, viz. A man should divide his capital into three parts, and invest one third in land, one third in merchandise, and reserve one third in ready money;[1] for if he loses in one thing or in another, he has still something to fall back upon. We also infer the following: "The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses," that means merchandise; "and in all that thou settest thine hand unto," that means ready cash in *hand;* "and he shall bless thee in the land,"[2] means the field.

*Then the other company which is left shall escape.* This text also teaches us: When one wicked prince banishes Israel, God sends a good prince after it to do them good, in order that Israel should be "*left*" in the world.

10 *I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies;* that is to say, I have already received much good from God, so that I am not worthy to receive more mercy; even when God promised to do me good, I fear lest I have committed many transgressions.

*For with my staff I passed over this Jordan,* when I fled from before Esau, *and now I am become two companies.* The Midrash writes: The meaning of "*With my staff I passed over this Jordan,*" is, that Jacob had with his staff divided Jordan, and crossed over it dryshod.

The B'chai remarks: From this (text) we learn that a man in his prosperity should remember his adversity of former days long gone by, in order that he should praise God who helped him out of it.

11 *Lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.* Jacob said: "For my own personal self I am not afraid, for God has promised me that He would preserve me from all evil; but when Esau slays my children, how will the blessing be fulfilled which thou (O God) hast promised me: '*I will make thy seed as the sand of the sea*'"?

[1] *Tal. Misc.*, p. 60, 42. [2] Deut. xxviii. 8.

14 *And he took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother.* He took what a man can carry in his hand, namely, *precious stones.*

The B'chai and the Toldoth Yitzkhac say: He (Jacob) sent him a bird called Sperber (probably a falcon or hawk), which princes carry on their hands for purposes of the chase, because Esau used to hunt.

14 *Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats.* The B'chai writes: He placed goats first, because they always go first before all other cattle, and also because they have more males than other cattle; afterwards he says camels, because they are better than all cattle; then he mentions clean cattle, and lastly unclean cattle * * * *

Another explanation is: Jacob would not mention to Esau the goats first, in order not to excite his hatred for having taken away the blessing by means of the kids' skins; but now, after he had prayed, he said, "I have no fear for thee!" Hence he placed the goats first, to show that the kids were the means by which, said he, "I took the blessing to be thy lord, and thou shalt be my servant." Lastly he sent asses and foals, to show that in the end the Messiah (Christ) will come, of whom it is said: "Poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."[1] By this Jacob showed Esau what will come to pass respecting Israel. The presents numbered five hundred and fifty, which shows that the kingdom of Esau is to commence five hundred and fifty years before the kingdom of Israel.

The Baal Hatturim writes: All the words in the verse, "*Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams,*" end (in the original) with the letter *Mem*,[2]

[1] Zech. ix. 9.

[2] All the Hebrew words in ver. 14 end with the letter *Mem.* עזים :מאתים ותישים עשרים רחלים מאתים ואילים עשרים. The Hebrew word for spot, blemish or defect is, מום *Mum*, which resembles the sound of the letter *Mem* ם, and thus it is proved that all the cattle Jacob sent to Esau

to show that all the cattle which Jacob sent were defective and not fit for offering.

Rashi writes: Jacob gave one male for ten she goats, one male for ten sheep, but only four cows for one bullock and two females for one ass; because goats and sheep do not work at all, oxen labour hard, and asses travel far.

Camels were thirty in number, but in consideration of their natural modesty the text is silent as to the proportion of their females to one male.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac remarks: God did not appear to Esau, as he did to Laban, to warn him against doing Jacob any evil, because God wished Israel to fear (the rod),[1] and be pious. For the same reason Jacob did not pray when Laban pursued him as he prayed when about to meet Esau, because Laban was angry only for a time, but *Esau is a constant enemy of Jacob.*[2]

The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: God made the angels forsake Jacob, and they did not watch over him that Esau should do him no evil, in order to show that the righteous are greater than the angels,[3] and thus we find Jacob wrestled with an angel and prevailed, and had power over the angel.[4]

16–18 *Put a space betwixt drove and drove,* in order that Esau should think that there was *much* cattle. And he told his servants, "When Esau meets you, and asks whose these cattle are, ye shall say: From thy servant Jacob is this present sent unto my lord Esau, and Jacob comes behind us. Should Esau ask, 'Why he did not come at once to meet me,' say ye, he thought—

20 *I will appease him with the present that goes before me,* and will come afterwards." The B'chai writes: Jacob prayed to

were defective. Nothing in connection with Esau can be without some *Mum*, some flaw, spot, blemish, or defect, and simply because he is Esau, the wicked Esau!

[1] Comp. Isa. x. 5.

[2] עֵשָׂו אֵין תָּמִיד אֵיבָה שׁוֹנֵא צוּ יַעֲקֹב

[3] 1 Cor. vi. 3.

[4] Hos. xii. 4.

God, "*and put a space!*" *i.e.* When troubles come upon Israel, that there may be a wide space between one trouble and another.

21 *And himself lodged that night in the company.* Not in a tent, in order to be ready should Esau make a night attack.

22 *And he took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons.* The Chizkûni writes: He therefore placed the women before the children, in order that when Esau came to meet him, and to kill, he should kill the women rather than the children. When he fled from Laban he placed the women behind, for the same reason.

Rabbi Israel writes: The women went before, because when the brook Jabbok was divided, the children were afraid to proceed, as we find when the Red Sea was divided, the children of Israel were afraid to proceed, till Nahshon the son of Amminadab went in first,[1] and God greatly rewarded him for it.

Rashi asks: Why are mentioned the eleven sons only, and where was Dinah? The answer is: Jacob hid her in a box, that Esau should not see her and ask to marry her. But God punished Jacob for it, for she was dishonoured by Shechem; had he given her to Esau she might have made him *pious.*

*And he passed over the ford Jabbok.* Jacob alone first passed over the ford, to ascertain its depth, and after having done so, he led his household over.

*And Jacob was left alone,* for he returned to fetch some small jugs which he had forgotten on the other side, and thus he was left alone. From this we learn that the righteous value very much their money,[2] because they do not rob others;

[1] In the Talmud we are told: When Israel stood by the Red Sea, the tribes were contending with each other as to which should first enter into it, when the tribe of Benjamin leaped into the sea before all. *Soteh,* fol. 36B.

[2] The version of this text runs thus in the Talmud:—מכאן לצדיקים שחביב עליהם ממונם יותר מגופם, *i.e.* From this we learn that the

for on account of small jugs, Jacob returned; and because he was left alone, an angel wrestled with him till a dust arose from the earth (and reached the throne of glory).[1] He wrestled with him till the morning star arose. The angel was the Prince of Esau,[2] who sought ever to find a sin in Jacob in order that he should by this means be able to prevail over him.

*And when he saw that he prevailed not against him*—because he found no sin in him—*he touched the hollow of his thigh;* that is to say, on account of the sin of his having married two sisters; thus he prevailed somewhat against him.

The Baal Hatturim writes: When the angel saw that he could not prevail against him he thought that he (Jacob) must be an angel, and he touched him on the thigh.

26 *And he said, Let me go.* For because he was sent by God to Jacob, he would not leave Jacob without his permission.

*For the morning star arose.*[3] "What!" said Jacob, "art thou then a thief, that thou art afraid of the day?" But the angel replied, "At the rising of the morning star it is my first turn since my creation to sing '*The Song*' (the Sheerah)[4] before God." And Jacob said:

*I will not let thee go except thou bless me;* that is to say, except thou confirmest the blessings which my father bestowed upon me. And the angel said:—

28 *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel.* Israel shall be thy name, because thou hast ruled as a prince with Esau, with Laban, and with angels. Thou shalt be called no more

Mammon of the Righteous is more beloved unto them than their own bodies. *Chullin*, fol. 91A.

[1] *Ibid.* על כסא הכבוד.

[2] There are seventy nations of the world represented by seventy princes, of whom Esau (*i.e.* Edom or Rome) was one, and each prince has a representative angel, the one referred to in the text being Esau's.

[3] A.V. "For the day breaketh."

[4] Every devout Jew daily repeats the שירה, "*The Song*," as contained in Exod. v. 1–19. The angels in heaven have to repeat daily their song, but as here stated, not by all, but it would seem by turns of different hosts.

Jacob, which means "*False*," that is to say, thou hast taken the blessing by *falsehood*; but Israel shalt thou be called, which showeth that thou hast taken the blessings with princely power!

The angel confirmed the blessings, and hence it is said: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob,"[1] that is to say, that which Jacob did to Esau and Laban, was all with truth and without deception.[2]

The Midrash says: The likeness of Jacob was engraved on the Throne of Glory. "*As a prince hast thou power with God*," for thy likeness is on the Throne of Glory.

The Chizkûni writes: The angel said unto Jacob, "Thou hast no need to fear me," "*for the morning star arose*," and the (heavenly) princes and angels have no power with men at daytime. On this,

29 *Jacob said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And the angel answered, Why askest thou my name?* An angel has no fixed name, but is named after his errand.

The B'chai writes: The angel said, "We do not tell our names, we do not wish to make ourselves respected as though we do things of ourselves, we only perform God's command."

Some say: The angel said, "Ask me not my name; for because I could not prevail against thee, it would be my disgrace that it should be known who I am."

The Chizkûni writes: The angel said, "Thou needest not know my name, '*thou hast prevailed*' (and that is enough for thee to know)."

31 *The sun rose upon him.* Rashi asks: Did then the sun rise upon Jacob and not upon the whole world? The answer is: For the sake of Jacob the sun rose before the time, in order that he should be healed[3] of his lameness. We find the same when Jacob came out of Beersheba, the sun set before the time, for his sake.[4]

[1] Micah vii. 20.
[2] *Vide* Isa. v. 20, 21.
[3] *Vide* Mal. iv. 2.
[4] *Vide* xxviii. 11, *ante*.

32 *Therefore, let the children of Israel not eat the hinder part of cattle till they extract the sinews.* (A.V. "Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank.") This is because the angel touched the sinew which shrank.[1]

The Chizkûni says: The Israelites are condemned not to eat the hind quarter, because they (Jacob's sons) had left *Jacob alone* in the field, and he was consequently smitten in the thigh.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: The angel caused Jacob to halt or limp, thus to oblige him to bow down to Esau, for a limping man seems to bow down, hence it is said: "*And bowed himself to the ground seven times.*"

CHAPTER XXXIII.—2 *And he put the handmaids and their children foremost.* He placed Bilhah and her children foremost, then followed Zilpah and her children, afterwards came Leah and her children, and at the very last he placed Rachel and Joseph, because he greatly loved Rachel.

3 *And he passed over before them.* Before them all, for he thought, let Esau first fight with me.

4 *And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.*

6 *Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.*

7 *And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves; and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.* Rashi writes: Of all, the mothers are mentioned before their respective children; but of Rachel, Joseph is mentioned before her, because she was very pretty, and Joseph placed himself before her, that Esau the wicked should not see her. Esau then asked Jacob:

[1] To this day the hind quarters of a clean quadruped is forbidden food to the Jews, unless the objectionable sinews are first extracted. This operation is called *porging*, and is an art which requires much study, and is not to be practised by any Jew without a special licence from the chief Rabbi. See *Tal. Misc.*, p. 84, 16.

8 *Who is all this troop which I met?* Rashi writes: Esau had met many companies of angels, who had beaten his followers, and asked them "whose are ye?" They replied, "Esau's." The angels then continued to beat them. They then said, "But he is the son of Isaac, and Abraham's grandson." The angels still continued beating them. When they said, "He is Jacob's brother," the angels left off beating them, and said, "Ye are of our people."

3 *Let it be thine what is thine.* Here Esau approved of the blessing (to be the property of Jacob); and here Jacob was blessed by Isaac, by the angel, and by Esau (as well).

10 *And Jacob said . . . Receive my present, for because I have seen thy face it is as though I had seen thine angel.* The reason why Jacob mentioned unto Esau that he had seen his angel, was to inspire him with fear, and with the thought: If he was delivered from my angel, I can do nothing unto him.

11 *And he urged him, and he took it.* And Esau said, "I will do thee a good service, and will go with thee"; but Jacob said, "Thou knowest that I cannot go at thy pace."

13 *For the children are tender and small, and the sheep are young.* The B'chai says: It is stated in the Midrash, that Esau said to Jacob: "Let us divide between us this world and the world to come." Jacob replied: "My '*children are tender*,' and weak in the (performance of the) precepts, and if they are to have this world also, then they will not be able to endure the pains of hell (in the next world)." Hence—

14 *Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant;* that is to say, Take for thyself the share of this world; *and I will lead on softly*, I will go with my children into captivity, *until I come unto my lord unto Seir;* that is, when Messiah will come, as it is stated in Scripture: "And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."[1]

16 *So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.* He

[1] Obad. 21.

returned *alone;* his four hundred men separated from him, and God gave them their reward (for so doing). When David killed the people of Edom, God delivered four hundred of them.[1]

18 *And Jacob came intact to the city Shechem.* Entire, with the knowledge of the Law, not having forgotten anything in the house of Laban (where he had not much time for study); *entire,* with his money, for the amount of the presents given to Esau was restored to him; *and entire* in his body, that he became cured of the lameness which the angel had caused him.

19 *And he bought a parcel of a field at Shechem, and on it he built an altar unto God.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.—1 *And Dinah the daughter of Leah went out.*[2] Rashi writes: Scripture says, *The daughter of Leah,* and not the daughter of Jacob, to show that Dinah was a goer out, as her mother Leah, for Leah *went out* to meet Jacob, and said unto him, "*Thou must* come in unto me, for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes;"[3] and Dinah *went out* to see the daughters of the land, and Shechem the son of Hamor took her *by force* (without hire).

The B'chai says: Jacob was punished, because he hid Dinah in a box, that Esau should not take her for a wife; but God said unto Jacob, "Thou didst not wish to give her to Esau, *who was circumcised,* one shall be with her *who is* not circumcised, and this was Shechem the son of Hamor."

It is said in a Midrash:[4] If a woman sits at home, she atones for the sins of her whole household quite as much as the altar atoned for the sins of the whole world; as Scripture says: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of

[1] *Vide* 1 Sam. xxx. 17.

[2] Jewish chronology states that Dinah was then nine or ten years old, and her brothers Simeon and Levi were at the most thirteen and fourteen.

[3] Chap. xxx. 16.

[4] In Jewish literature we often meet with the phrase, "It is said in a Midrash," without giving the title, fol. or col.

thine house."[1] As a vine that grows *in* the house and the branches thereof extend *out* of the house, so shall thy wife be always *in* the house, and her children shall extend over the world to study the Torah (the Law). "Thy children shall be like olive plants"; that is to say, all trees but the olive tree receive the ingrafting of other branches, so shall thy wife be modest, and shall not unite herself to another husband; thus shall she be worthy that her children shall be anointed with holy oil. * * * *

Therefore Scripture likens children to olives, for as olives are at first bitter, and in the end sweet, thus likewise to bring up children is very bitter, but, when they grow up, and turn out well, they are very sweet.

6 *And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.* The Midrash writes: Hamor told him, "Thy grandfather Abraham was a prince, and I too am a prince."

3 *And his soul clave unto Dinah.* Shechem attached himself unto Dinah. The B'chai says: Shechem suggested to her, "Thy father has no fields, and if thou marry me thou wilt have many fields."

7 *And the sons of Jacob came out of the field.* The Chizkûni writes: As soon as the sons of Jacob learnt that their sister was defiled, they at once came from the field and lamented that so great a disgrace should befal the daughter of Jacob; for at that time even idolaters had not done such a wicked thing, and especially to such a worthy man as Jacob.

And Hamor came to Jacob and his sons, and said unto them, "Give your daughter to my son for a wife, and as much money as you wish for a marriage-settlement I will give."

13 *And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully.* For great shame Jacob himself could not answer, and therefore were his children obliged to answer. The sons of Jacob thought to themselves: We may deceive

[1] Ps. cxxviii. 3.

them, because they defiled our sister. They proposed to them that the whole population of the city should submit to circumcision as a first condition, intending to kill them should they not submit to the condition; and should they submit to it, they intended to come upon them on the third day after circumcision, when they would be particularly weak, and slay them. So writes the Chizkûni and also the B'chai. And the children of Jacob said:

16 *Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us.* Rashi writes: The sons of Jacob spoke to Shechem and Hamor thus: "We will give our daughters to you, but such only as we choose to give; and your daughters we will take, but such only as we choose. The choice should belong to us." But when Shechem and Hamor came to persuade the citizens about circumcision, they reported the reverse of this, and said:

21 *Let us take their daughters to us for wives,* such as we wish to take, *and give them our daughters,* such as we wish to give; with us shall be the option, only let us circumcise.

24 *And every male was circumcised; all that went out of the gate of his city.* The Chizkûni observes: Here it is said, "All that *went out* of the gate of his city," and of Sarah it is said, "All that *went in* at the gate of his city";[1] because Shechem forced all that *went out* to be circumcised *against their will,* but of Sarah all *came in willingly* to show kindness towards Sarah.

25 *And it came to pass on the third day, when they were weak, Simeon and Levi*[2] *took their swords, and safely came upon the city, and slew them,* and they took away their goods and their money, and their sister, and went away.

The Chizkûni says: They killed them, because they heard that they had repented being circumcised, and also because

[1] Chap. xxiii. 10, *ante.*

[2] Who were only thirteen or fourteen years old. *Vide* Note to ver. 1, *ante.*

Shechem and Hamor made a false statement to the citizens, and reversed the condition, as we have above stated, and Shechem and Hamor told them that all the money and goods of the children of Jacob would belong to them. Therefore they killed them, and relied on the merits of Jacob (to save them from the consequences of their crime). The B'chai writes: They therefore came upon them on the *third* day, because everything that is third is weak. Tuesday, the third day of the week, is weak for (sick) people. Our sages have therefore ordained that the national delegates in the Temple should not fast on Sundays, because Sunday is the third day after the creation of man,[1] for Adam was created on Friday, Sunday being the third day after his creation, and man therefore is weak on that day. And therefore also do we smell spices at the end of the Sabbath when the Sunday begins, in order to refresh the soul with a good smell.

The Ramban asks with reference to Rashi's saying, that at that time the idolaters did not follow whoredoms: Is it not said about the Canaanites: "For *all* these abominations have the men of the land done"?[2] The Toldoth Yitzkhac replies thus: In Jacob's time the idolaters were pious, because it was not very long after the Deluge, which was brought on in consequence of whoredom; but in the time of Moses, long after the Deluge, and the cause of it forgotten, they did follow whoredoms. Shouldest thou ask: If the idolaters of the time were pious, why then were Abraham and Isaac so much afraid that their wives would be taken away from them? The answer is this: Such beauties as Sarah and Rebekah were not to be found in all the world, so that kings lusted after them.

30, 31 *And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, ye have troubled me to make me contemptible among the inhabitants of the land*

[1] Vide *Treasures of the Talm.*, p. 130, Note, where one of the reasons for not fasting on Sundays is מפני הנוצרים, *i.e.* because Christians make their festival on that day.

[2] Lev. xvii. 27.

. . . *and they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me.* . . . *And they said, Should it be dealt with our sister as with an harlot?* The B'chai writes: The lawfulness[1] of the children of Jacob slaying the whole city of Shechem was, because the inhabitants practised whoredoms and robbery more than the whole world; also because it was reported, that as soon as they were healed from the circumcision they would slay all the household of Jacob. Hence Simeon and Levi slew the whole city.[2]

CHAPTER XXXV.—1 *And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel.* Rashi says: It is therefore said, "Arise," which means (in the original) *stand up*, because God told him, "Thou hast delayed fulfilling thy vow to bring a Corban (an offering), and therefore hast thou been punished by Dinah being taken by Shechem. Now, get up, and go to Bethel, and bring thy Corban."

The Chizkûni asks: Rashi stated before, that Jacob was punished because he would not give Dinah to Esau in order that she should make him pious, and now he states that he was punished because he delayed to bring his Corban; how is that? The reply is: Both these things caused him to be punished.

2 *Then Jâcob said to his children.* . . . *Put away the strange gods that are among you*, for we must go to offer sacrifices, and it must not be said that we sacrifice to strange gods.

*And change your garments;* that is to say, put off the garments of idolaters.

4 *And Jacob hid the strange gods under the oak*, as he could not cast them into the sea, for he was far from it.

5 *And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them*, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: The cities round about were angry with the Shechemites because they circumcised themselves and

[1] הֵיתֵר. [2] See note to Chap. xxvii. 45.

became Jews, and had cast away their god; hence they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob, and therefore it is said "*the terror of God*," that is, the anxiety about their gods, was upon them.

8 *Deborah Rebekah's nurse died.* Rashi asks: How does Deborah come to be in Jacob's house? The answer is: Rebekah sent her to Laban to fetch Jacob home, and she died on the road, and he buried her. At the very time of her burial he learned that his mother Rebekah had died.

In a Midrash it is stated: When Rebekah died, people said, "Abraham is dead, and Isaac is blind, and Jacob is away in Padan-Aram, who then can bury her but Esau? and (in that case) she will be cursed in having had such a bad son," and therefore they buried her at night; and hence Scripture is silent about her death; and hence, also, Jacob called the place Allon-bachuth, which means, "*two weepings*" (two occasions for weeping): (1) he wept, because (on that spot) he heard of his mother's death; and (2) he wept, because she was buried without honour (and at night).

It is asked: What advantage is there in the silence about her death; if it were thought that she were alive would she not be cursed that she had such a bad son? The answer is: It is said: "*Thou shalt not curse the deaf;*"[1] one that does not hear, but not one that is dead: hence Scripture is silent, and does not mention that Rebekah is dead.

9, 10 *And God blessed him*, and condoled with him in his mourning, and said, "Thy name shall not be called *Jacob*, which means *Falsehood*, that thou hast taken the blessings with falsehood but *Israel* shall be thy name, which means *a Prince*." The B'chai and the Chizkûni say: Thy name shall not be Jacob only, but at times thou shalt also be called Israel; thou shalt have both names.

16, 17 *And Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour, and the midwife said unto her, Fear not, thou shalt have a son.*

[1] Lev. xix. 14.

Our sages say: With each son of Jacob was born a female, but with Benjamin was born two females.

The Midrash Rabbah tells a story about two disciples of Rabbi Jehoshua, who disguised themselves in Gentile clothes that they should not be recognised as Jews, because there was an edict to kill such Jews as refused to worship idols. An official found them and thus addressed them: "I know that ye are Jews; why do ye disguise yourselves? why do ye not rather give yourselves up for God's sake?" They replied: "It is not lawful to kill oneself, hence we do what we can to save ourselves, perhaps they may not recognise us." The official replied: "Well, I will ask you something out of your Torah; if ye can reply to it, then I will do you no harm. The text of Scripture says: When Rachel was in hard labour her midwife told her, Fear not, thou shalt have a son. What relief was it to her in her distress whether she would have a son or not?" The disciples replied: "A midwife ought to speak kind words to a woman in hard labour in order to cheer her, which would refresh her body in pain."[1]

And Jacob buried Rachel in the way to Ephrath, which was only about an acre apart from that place. He wished to bring her into the town, but because she died in confinement she was not fit to be brought in. Hence he buried her on the road, and—

20 *Jacob set a pillar upon her grave.* The B'chai says: It is an honour for women to be buried on the very spot where they die rather than that they should be carried over fields.

22 *Reuben went and lay with Bilhah.* When Rachel died, Jacob took his bed which used to be in her tent and placed it in that of Bilhah. This displeased Reuben, and he threw out the bed, and said unto Bilhah: "Thou wishest to be equal to my aunt Rachel, but she was a lady and thou art a servant.

[1] It is hard to see the point of this. If the official let them off with this answer, he was very easily satisfied.

And because he thus profaned the bed of his father, Scripture records it as if he had been lying with her.[1]

The Ramban writes: Reuben profaned the bed because he reasoned with himself thus: "I am firstborn, and as such I ought to have two portions, or shares, in my father's property, but if he should have more children, my share in the property will be less. Leah is now too old to have children," and Zilpah may have been dead at that time, therefore he removed the bed of Bilhah.

*And Israel heard it.* Jacob heard that Reuben threw out the bed; yet he was not very angry with him, as he was the first of all his children.

*Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.* The text shows that they were all equally pious, for *Reuben did not sin.* The text also tells us that he had no more children, only twelve.[2]

27 *And Jacob came unto Isaac his father, unto Mamre, unto the city of Arba.* It is therefore not said that he came unto his mother, because she was dead, although Scripture is silent about it, as we have stated above.

29 *And Isaac died . . . and Esau and Jacob buried him.* The Chizkûni says: Esau is here mentioned first, because Jacob showed him honour, for he feared him, because he had said, "When my father dies, then will I slay my brother Jacob." Of Abraham it is said: "Isaac and Ishmael buried him."[3] Isaac first, because he was born of Sarah, a lady; but Ishmael was born of Hagar, a servant.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—2 *Esau took a wife, Aholibamah.* Rashi says: This is Judith mentioned in Toldoth[4] (name of

[1] In the Talmud we are distinctly told: Whoever says that Reuben sinned is decidedly in error. *Shabbath*, fol. 55B.

[2] According to the Jewish chronology of Rab. David Ganz, all the sons of Jacob, except Benjamin, were born in Padan-Aram, in the space of seven years only.

[3] Chap. xxv. 9.

[4] Chap. xxvi. 3, *ante*, יְהוּדִית, literally, a Jewess, or in connection with a noun it means Jewish.

the section), but her real name was Aholibamah. He gave her the name Judith to show that she was pious, and held the Jewish religion, in order (the easier) to deceive his father.

3 *And Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter.* And he took another wife, whose name was *Bosmas*, the daughter of Ishmael. And the reason why, in Toldoth,[1] when Esau married her he called her *Mahalath*, is, because it was one of the three things which insure the forgiveness of sins; 1. when one becomes a Jewish proselyte by embracing Judaism; 2. when one rises to greatness; and 3. when one marries a wife. Hence he called her Mahâlath because her sins were forgiven.[2]

12 *And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz.* Scripture shows us, although she was of royal descent, yet she attached herself to Eliphaz as a mere concubine, simply because he was a descendant of Abraham.

24 *This was that Anah that invented the mules in the wilderness;* for he crossed an ass with a mare, and the result was the birth of the mule.

The mules are therefore called (in the original) Yeimin[3] (terrors), because man has a great dread of a mule, for his kick is incurable.

The Chizkûni asks: Were there not mules in the time of Isaac; of the dung of whose mules it was said, that it was more productive than the gold and silver of Abimelech? The answer is: There were formerly also mules, but the ass and the mare in that case had crossed on their own account (without human intervention).

[1] Chap. xxviii. 9, *ante.*

[2] "Mahalath" is a play on the Hebrew word מח which means "to forgive." A proselyte is like a new born child (sinless). *Bechoroth*, fol. 47A. Rising to greatness or dignity, a Rabbi, a Bridegroom, a President of a College, a Warden of a Synagogue, and the like; such it is said in the Talmud, are not raised to dignity or greatness unless all their sins have been forgiven them. אין אדם עולה לגדולה אא"כ מוחלין לו כל עונותיו: *Sanhedrin*, fol. 14A.

[3] יְמִם, probably an abbreviation of אֵימִים, Emim, *i.e.* Terrors.

A mule can have no offspring, because God would not have it that creatures should perpetuate any that He had not created. The blessing which God had bestowed upon His creatures, that they should increase and multiply, does not extend to those which spring from two different species.

END OF THE EIGHTH SECTION.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—1 *And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger.* The B'chai writes: The righteous man is like a stranger in this world. A stranger, having no friends, no house and no fields, thinks only to provide himself with food, and to wander about; so likewise is the pious man—he thinks only of death, and prepares of his provision for the way, that is *good works.* Hence the text says: "Jacob dwelt in the land as a stranger," just like his fathers before him dwelt in the land as strangers in the world, and had only thought of the other world.

In the preceding section the text speaks of the children of Esau, but says very little about them, for it does not wish to say much about the wicked; but when it comes to the children of Jacob it records what happened to them.

There is a parable: A man lost a pearl in the sand, he took a sieve and sifted the sand, and when he found the pearl, he threw away the sand and took up the pearl.

2 *These are the generations of Jacob.* These are the things which happened to the children of Jacob. The first thing is: Joseph was seventeen years old and fed his father's sheep, and the lad was brought up with the children of Bilhah and Zilpah. And the text says:

*And the lad*, that is to say, he was *young*, and hence it was no disgrace to him to be with such associates as the children of Bilhah and Zilpah when they were feeding his father's flocks; he was *a lad, too young.* So writes the Chizkûni. But Rashi writes:

*And the lad*, he acted as a young child; he adorned his person and smoothed down his hair, and continually associated with the children of Bilhah and Zilpah; for all the other children considered them to be low and kept aloof from them, but Joseph the Righteous associated with them.

*And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.* What Joseph *saw* in the children of Leah he related to his father. Rashi observes: Of Joseph it is said, "And Joseph brought unto his father *their* evil report;" but of the spies it is said, "And they brought up an evil report *of the land;*" this is because Joseph was pious and only told what he saw, and no lie; but the spies brought up an evil report of what they had not seen.

Joseph was mistaken in his brethren. He saw them slaughter a cow, in which they found a living calf, and this, without first slaughtering, they used as food. He, not knowing the law that such a calf was lawful for food without slaughtering, reported to his father that they were eating "Flesh with the life thereof;"[1] as also that they called the sons of the handmaids (Bilhah and Zilpah) slaves. As to his report about their adultery, for that (report) his master's wife wished to commit adultery with him.

3 *And Israel loved Joseph more than all his children.* The Chizkûni writes: All the brethren hated Joseph. The children of Leah hated him, because the father loved him more than all; the children of Bilhah and Zilpah hated him, because he spoke evil of the children of Leah."

Rashi and the B'chai say: It is therefore stated, "These are the generations of Jacob, *Joseph*," because all the service Jacob rendered to Laban was for the sake of Rachel, and Joseph was Rachel's son; and also because Joseph had the physiognomy of Jacob, and all the good qualities of all the brethren were in Joseph. The birth-right of Reuben was given to Joseph; the

[1] אבר מן החי as it is technically called in the Talmud, and which was forbidden food even to Gentiles. Gen. ix. 4.

prophecy of Levi[1] was in Joseph, for he prophesied unto Pharaoh that there would be a famine; the royalty of Judah was in Joseph, for he was a ruler in Egypt; the wisdom of Issachar[2] was in Joseph, for it is said of him: "There is none so discreet and wise as thou art."[3]

All that happened to Jacob happened to Joseph. Esau wanted to kill Jacob, and the brethren wanted to kill Joseph. The mother of Jacob was barren, and so was also the mother of Joseph. Jacob was born circumcised, so likewise was Joseph.[4] The mother of Jacob had hard labour and had only two sons; this, likewise, was the case with the mother of Joseph. Angels visited Jacob, and so also was Joseph visited by them. Through a dream Jacob came to all his property, and so also Joseph.

The Ramban asks, on Rashi's remarks: If Joseph spoke evil only against the children of Leah, why then did the sons of the maidservants consent to his being slain and sold? for they were four in number, and Reuben, who did not consent, makes five, and with Joseph it makes six; surely these six could have defended themselves against the rest of the brethren. The answer is: The sons of the maidservants hated him because he spoke evil of them also. The B'chai and Chizkûni write in the same manner.

*And Israel loved Joseph more than all his children.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: It is usual when one is a tale-bearer he is much disliked for it, hence Scripture says with reference to Jacob, although Joseph brought him slanderous tales, he did not love him *for that*, but "*because he was the son of his old age*" (which means) because he was clever in the Torah.[5]

[1] Moses, the father of the prophets, was a descendant of Lèvi.

[2] 1 Chron. xii. 32. [3] Chap. xli. 39, *ante*.

[4] *Avoth d. Rab. Nathan*, ch. 2.

[5] To an outsider this rendering of בן זקונים is quite obscure, but to the Rabbinical Jew it is as clear as the day, and as witty as it is clear. זקן means an Elder, and by the usual twist of the Rabbis, בן זקונים is read בן זקנים,

4 *And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: Is it right because the father loved Joseph that they should therefore hate him? What had he done? The answer is this: The brethren said, "Had not our father listened to Joseph's slander, we should not have cared about it, for he would have been only a fool for his tale-bearing; but now, seeing that after his evil speaking our father loves him so much, we feel persuaded that our father accepted his slander." Hence they hated him.

*And he made him a shirt of many colours.* The father made Joseph a silk shirt, and from this shirt came upon him all troubles. From this do our sages (infer and) teach, that it is not lawful to make for one child better clothes than for the others, that there should be no jealousy among them.

The word Pasim (in the original), *i.e.* "*many colours,*" points to his troubles. (By Notricon) the letter P is Potiphar; the letter S stands for Sochrim; the letter I is Ishmaelites; and the letter M points to the Midianites;[1] that is to say, to these Joseph had been sold.

*And could not speak peaceably with him.* Rashi says: The text shows us that the brothers were righteous men, and could not speak with the mouth otherwise than they felt in their heart; they hated him, and *could not speak peaceably unto him.*

5 *And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren,* in the hope that they would not hate him when he told them that he would be a lord, not because of his father's love, but because of the providence of God.

The Chizkûni says: The first dream was not true, and therefore it was not recorded.

7 *For behold, we were binding sheaves of corn in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and remained standing upright, but your*

*i.e.* a son of the Elders, in other words, a disciple of the wise, hence "*clever in the law.*"

[1] פסים=פוטיפר, סוחרים, ישמעאלים, מדינים.

*sheaves stood round in a circle and bowed down to my sheaf.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: The sheaves went about and refused to bow down to his sheaf, but they were obliged to do so.

Another explanation is: They went about his sheaf as servants go about their master to serve him.

Another explanation is: Your sheaves stood round about, they became diminished; that is to say, the dream indicated that in time when the famine should prevail, he who would collect corn besides Joseph would have his corn rotten. And hence was the dream about sheaves of corn, to show that on account of their coming after corn, the brothers would have to bow down to Joseph.

8 *And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us?* For they knew that the dream signified that he would be a king.

The B'chai observes: Although they hated Joseph, God caused them to interpret the dream in his favour.

*And they hated him yet the more for his dreams* and for his words; because he often repeated his dreams and boasted about them.

9, 10 *And he dreamed yet another dream . . . and he told it to his father, and to his brethren.* He dreamed that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to him.

*And his father rebuked him, and said unto him . . . Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren come and bow down to thee?* "Thy mother is already dead, and therefore thy dream is a lie." All this Jacob said, in order that his brethren should not hate him; but Jacob himself knew that it was true.

The moon, which signifies the mother, was meant for Bilhah, who reared him as a mother. Our sages say that in every dream, though the dream be ever so true, there is some folly mixed up with it, and thus it was in this dream; though it was perfectly true, about the mother it was folly. Jacob knew

this, but wishing to avert the hatred of the brethren, he remarked accordingly.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: The first dream was sheaves of corn, and the second stars, because in the first instance they were to come to buy corn as common men, but on the second occasion they came with honour, as signified by the stars, themselves glorious objects. In the first dream Joseph did not see the sun and the moon, because the first time the brethren alone were to come into Egypt; but the second time they all came, and the father and Bilhah. And now it is plain why Joseph related the second dream to his father, and not the first, because the first dream indicated that the brethren alone would have to bow down to him.

The Imrae Noam says: In the first dream it is said, "made obeisance to my *sheaf*," but in the second it is said, "made obeisance to *me*," and it is not said, Made obeisance to my star; this is because at first the brethren did not recognise Joseph, and they bowed down to him for the sake of the corn he had, and hence it is said, "*to my sheaf*"; but the second time they knew that he was Joseph, hence it is said, "made obeisance *to me*," on account of my honour.

Another explanation is: The stars are in heaven, and he could not say *to my star*, for it would have been impossible to distinguish which was his star; but a sheaf he could hold in his hand, and say "*to my sheaf*."

12 *To feed their father's flock;* and they fed themselves also, eating their father's sheep without his knowledge. Hence in the Torah there is a dot on the particle which marks the accusative case (the sheep),[1] in order to show that they fed themselves on the sheep, and thereby they did great evil, for they feasted themselves with their father's sheep, and sold their brother Joseph.

13 *And Israel said unto Joseph, Now thy brethren are pasturing in Shechem, and I will send thee unto them*—to see

[1] אֹת צֹאן

what they are doing,—*and Joseph said, Behold, I am ready.* Although Joseph knew that the brethren hated him, and there was danger in his going to them, yet in honour and obedience to his parent he went.

14 *So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron.* That is to say, God had so ordained that through this accident Israel came into the captivity of Egypt, in fulfilment of the deep counsel of God communicated to Abraham (who was buried at Hebron), that his children would be in the captivity of Egypt four hundred years.

The Book of Jasher says: Because they were coming from the field later than usual, Jacob feared lest the people of Shechem came to war with them, and hence he sent Joseph to see how they were.

15 *And a certain man found him.* That was the angel Gabriel. The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: It is customary when a man has lost his way, to ask people to direct him; but people never ask a wanderer what he seeks: but here a certain man asks Joseph, "*What seekest thou?*" It must have been then an angel, who desired to lead him to his brethren, that he might come into Egypt.

Another explanation is this: Joseph asked the man to tell him where his brothers were pasturing, but did not ask him first whether *he knew* where they were; it is clear therefore that Joseph was aware that it was an angel, who knew where his brothers were.

It may also be inferred that this was no other angel than Gabriel, for here it is said: "And *a man* found him," and Gabriel is called *man*, for it is written, "The *man Gabriel*."[1]

17 *And the man said, They are departed hence.* Rashi asks: Joseph asked the angel where his brethren were, and the angel ought to have answered that question; what need had

[1] Dan. ix. 21. We have it several times in the Talmud, that God is also called *man*, and it is proved from Exod. xv. 3: "The Lord is a man of war."

he to add, "*They departed hence*"? The reply is: The angel told him not to go to his brethren, for they departed *hence*, that is to say, they departed from *brotherhood;* for "*hence*" [1] (in the original) is equivalent to *twelve*, that is to say, they do not wish to be twelve brothers, for they do not like thee for a brother. But Joseph did not listen to this, and went to his brethren in obedience to his father.

It is asked: Jacob having (no doubt) accompanied Joseph (part of the way at starting), why then was he unfortunate on the road? much rather ought "*the accompanying*" have been helpful to him. The reply is: Jacob intended that Joseph should go only to Shechem, and with that intention he accompanied him; but Joseph went beyond Shechem, hence "*the accompanying*" was of no avail to him. Providence so shaped the intention of Jacob in order that Joseph should come to Egypt.

18 *They conspired against him to slay him.* The brethren made up their minds to kill Joseph, but not wishing to do so with their own hands, they set fierce dogs upon him (to tear him to pieces); but God helped him, that the dogs did him no harm. Hence they said:

20 *Come now, therefore, and let us slay him;* "being saved from the dogs, let us kill him." But God said, "Well, *we shall see what will become of his dreams;*" that is to say, his dreams show that ye can do him no harm, but he will be a ruler over you.

21 *And when Reuben heard it, and wished to deliver him from their hands, he said, Let us not kill a soul.* Reuben wanted to make his brethren believe that he hated Joseph, that they might listen to his counsel, therefore he said, were he even a stranger it does not behove us to kill any one, and hence he did not say, Let us not shed *his* blood; but he simply said:

22 *Shed no blood*, "of any man, for God will punish you; I say this, not because I love Joseph, but I mean it for your

[1] שנים = 12. *Vide* List of Numerals, p. xii.

good." Reuben reasoned with himself thus: "I am the eldest son, and therefore my father will be angry with *me* that I did not deliver him." So writes the B'chai.

*Cast him into a pit.* The Chizkûni asks: What was the use of such advice since there were serpents[1] in the pit? The answer is: Reuben advised he should be cast into a pit, and intended, when the brethren went away, to take him out and restore him to his father. But the brothers took him out of the empty pit and cast him into a pit of serpents, hence it is said (ver. 29), "Reuben returned unto the pit; and he found Joseph not there."

23, 24 *And they stript Joseph of his silk shirt . . . . And they took him and cast him into a pit.* Simeon took him and cast him into the pit.

*And the pit was empty, there was no water in it.* It is asked: It is stated the pit was *empty*, then we know of course that there was no water in it; but why is it stated that there was no water in it? The answer is: The text shows us that *water* was not in it, but *serpents* were there. But the brothers had not seen the serpents, for they were in their holes, otherwise they would not have cast him in.

In the same sense writes also the Chizkûni, and says: Had there been water in the pit they would not have cast Joseph into it, for they said (ver. 27), "Let not our hand be upon him"—to kill him.

The Ramban observes: The serpents fled into their holes; for had they not done so, and had the brethren noticed that they did not harm Joseph, they would have comprehended that Joseph was a pious man, and would not have sold him.

25 *And they sat down to eat bread.* They sat down to eat at some distance in order not to hear the cry of their brother. Then came Ishmaëlites from Gilead, carrying wax, sealing-wax and old wine, and were going to Egypt.

Rashi says: The text states what wares the Ishmaelites were

[1] See comment on verses 23 and 24.

carrying, to show forth the merit of Joseph; for the Ishmaelites always carried such goods as stink, but now they providentially had such as had a good odour, in order that the righteous Joseph should not be annoyed by a disgusting smell.

The brethren cast Joseph into the pit naked, without a shirt; but when the Ishmaelites pulled him up from the pit, the brothers saw the shirt (on him), and quarrelled with the Ishmaelites about it, saying, *We have sold him without a shirt.*[1] Then the Israelites gave them shoes for the shirt. Thus writes the Imrae Noam.

27 *And his brethren were content.* And the brethren *obeyed* Judah, and sold Joseph for a slave; "for," said they, "the children of Abraham are to be (captives) in the captivity, and as he also is a son of Abraham, perhaps he will mediate and suffer for us all."[2]

28 *And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit.* Rashi says: The brethren drew Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites, and these sold him to the Midianites, and these again sold him into Egypt. But the Chizkûni and the B'chai write thus: The Midianites came near the pit, and on hearing Joseph's cry, they drew him out of it, and then sold him to the Ishmaelites, who left him in pledge with the Midianites, and they together with the Ishmaelites sold him into Egypt; hence it is said, "And the *Midianites* sold him unto Potiphar," and it is also said: "And Potiphar . . . bought him of the *Ishmaelites.*"[3] But the explanation is, that he was sold by both. As to what Joseph said to his brethren when he made himself known to them—"I am Joseph your brother, whom *ye sold* into Egypt,"[4]—he meant to say: "By your casting me into the pit, I was sold into Egypt"; but the

[1] Yet in *Yevamoth*, fol. 79A, we are told that three marks characterize the Jews: they are compassionate, they are modest, and they are benevolent.

[2] As much as to say: Perhaps "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 50).

[3] Verse 36, and chap. xxxix. 1. [4] Chap. xlv. 4.

brethren did not know what had become of him. When Reuben returned to the pit, and did not find Joseph there, all the brethren thought that a wild beast had devoured him, for they knew not that the Midianites had got him out of the pit.

Another explanation is: Potiphar noticed that Joseph was very handsome, and he thought he is not a slave, but he must have been stolen; he then said to the Midianites, you must give me a surety that he was not stolen, and they brought the Ishmaelites for surety; hence says the text: "And Potiphar bought him of *the Ishmaelites*," that is to say, Potiphar bought him because the Ishmaelites were surety.

Rabbi Israel writes: The Ishmaelites together with the Midianites bought Joseph from his brethren; for the Ishmaelites gave a sum of money for him, and the Midianites having drawn him up from the pit, and kept him in their possession, had a legal claim upon him; and as they could not come to terms with the Ishmaelites, they proposed: "Let us lead him into Egypt and there sell him." The Ishmaelites thus got back their capital, and the Midianites got the profits.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: The Midianites, acting as brokers to the Ishmaelites, drew up Joseph out of the pit to show how handsome he was, as it is the custom of brokers to show up the goods they are commissioned to sell. Therefore, says the text: "And there passed by Midianites, and *they drew up* Joseph, and sold him to the Ishmaelites," that is to say, they were the brokers; and they again sold him to Potiphar, that is to say, the Midianites were the same brokers again, for the Ishmaelites told them, "As ye were brokers and helped us to buy him, be brokers and help us to sell him again." So write the (general) commentators.

Another explanation is: The Ishmaelites gave the money for Joseph, but they proposed to the Midianites, "We know that the Egyptians will not buy him, because he is circumcised, and they will suspect that circumcision is a defect * * *; therefore

ye take Joseph and sell him as if he were yours, and we will testify that circumcision is only a custom which is observed also by us Ishmaelites, and yet we have children." "And *the Midianites* sold him to Potiphar," and afterwards, says the text, "Potiphar bought him of *the Ishmaelites*," that is to say, the Ishmaelites were the real owners (and had a right) to sell Joseph, but the Midianites were the brokers (who sold him).[1]

*For twenty pieces of silver.* The brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver in weight. The Chizkûni and the B'chai write: God said: "Ye have sold Joseph, who is *a firstborn*, for twenty pieces of silver in weight, which is five selas,[2] therefore ye shall redeem your firstborn for five selas.[3]

29, 30 *When Reuben returned unto the pit . . . he rent his clothes, . . . and said, The child is not here, and I, whither shall I go?* How can I come to my father? for I am the eldest son, and my father will lay all the blame upon *me!*

The Chizkûni writes: Reuben was aware that his father would say: "Thou hast killed him, because the birthright was taken from thee and given to Joseph."

And where was Reuben when the brethren sold Joseph? (Reply) On that day he was waiting on his father; for every day the sons waited on him by turns. On that day also he did penance for having profaned the bed of his father.

31, 32 *And they killed a kid . . . and pierced the silk shirt,*[4] *and dipped the shirt in blood*, in order that it might be thought that a wild beast had devoured him.

[1] The conflicting account in the text as to the parts played by the Ishmaelites and Midianites in this drama, has puzzled a great many commentators; but no Gentile that we know of has ventured on such a far-fetched explanation as this.

[2] Selah is the name of a Jewish coin, which, according to the Jerusalem Talmud, seems to be identical with the shekel of the Pentateuch. In *Kidd.* 1, כל שקלים שכתוב בתורה סלעים.

[3] *Vide* Num. xviii. 15, 16.

[4] The rendering in the A.V. "And they sent the coat," is here rendered, "and they pierced, etc." שָׁלַח, *shalakh*, means "to send," and שָׁלַח

The Chizkûni writes: The text means (not pierced but), they *sent* the shirt on through a messenger, for they feared to bring it themselves because the father would charge them with killing him, because they hated him.

The B'chai says: It is necessarily to be inferred that they *sent* the shirt through a messenger, because it is said: "Is the shirt thy son's?" for had the brothers themselves brought it, they would have asked, "Is this shirt Joseph's?" for it is not usual to say before a father, "thy son's."

33 *And Jacob knew it, and said, An evil beast hath devoured him.* The Midrash observes: He thus predicted that Potiphar's wife, who is likened to an evil beast, would bring a false accusation against him, for which he would be cast into prison.

34 *And he mourned for his son many days;* that is to say, twenty-two years, and this he deserved, because he was at Laban's and on the road two and twenty years, and had not honoured his father Isaac; for the fourteen years he served for his wives, six for the sheep, and two years he was on the road, together make twenty-two.

35 *And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him.* The B'chai says: "His daughters" means Dinah and Sarah the daughter of Asher.[1] But Rashi says: With each son was born a daughter, which he married. So says Rabbi Yehudah. But the Ramban says: The six sons of Leah married the daughters which were born with the other six sons, and the others married the daughters which were born with the sons of Leah.[2]

*shelakh*, means "a sword." (See Job xxxiii. 18, and Joel ii. 8.) Now in the Hebrew text וישלחו is in the A.V. rendered, "and they *sent*," which is quite correct; but our commentator renders the same, "and they *pierced*," and we have no difficulty in admitting that this is also possibly correct, and for the following reason: *Shelakh* means a sword; by turning the noun into a verb, we should have then *to sword*, just as we turn the noun *spear* into the verb *to spear* The passage might then read thus: "And they sworded the coat"; in other words, "they *pierced* the coat."

[1] Num. xxvi. 46.

[2] It need hardly be said there is no warrant for this in the sacred text.

Rabbi Nehemiah says: The sons of Jacob married women of Canaan, and the text calls them daughters, because it is usual also to call a son's wife daughter.

*But he refused to be comforted.* Rashi asks: The Gemara says: God had decreed that the dead should be forgotten from the heart (of the living),[1] why then did Jacob weep so long, and *refused to be comforted?* The answer is: The decree refers to the *dead;* but Joseph was yet alive, and hence he was not forgotten from the heart, and Jacob continued to weep. The question is: If the dead be forgotten, and Jacob could not forget Joseph, why did he not conclude that he must be still alive? The answer is: Jacob did conclude as much, but he thought that he must be in a prison and in distress, and therefore he lamented so much.

*For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.* I will mourn for my son till the grave, that is to say, I will not forget my son till I die; or grave means Gehenna (*Hell*), for Jacob said, "God promised me that none of my children should die during my lifetime, and that was to be a sign that I should escape hell; but now when Joseph is not (alive), I fear that I shall descend into hell.

The Eben-Shoab writes: Jacob mourned so much for Joseph, because he was not yet twenty years old, and no man is punished for his sins if he is less than twenty years old; he must then have died on account of the sins of his father, and hence he mourned so much.

The Dębek Tov asks: Jacob was fourteen years in the Beth Hammidrash of Shem and Eber, during which time he had not honoured his parents, why was he not punished for that? The answer is: The parents waived the honour due to them, because they wished him to study the Torah. But why was he punished for it when at Laban's, since his parents ordered him to go there? The answer is: Rebekah soon sent Deborah

[1] *Psachim*, fol. 54B.

to fetch him home, but he tarried at Laban's to marry his daughters, and therefore he was punished.

*Thus his father wept for him.* The grandfather, Isaac, wept for the sorrow of Jacob, for *he knew* that Joseph was alive. God also revealed the secret unto Benjamin that Joseph was alive, and (for the merit of keeping the secret) his stone in the breast-plate was called Yoshpeh (Jasper),[1] which, consists of two (Hebrew) words, Yesh Peh, *i.e.* he has a mouth but has not betrayed that Joseph was alive.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—1 *And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren.* When the brethren saw the great distress of their father they lowered Judah down from his position, for they said unto him: "Thou art the chief brother among us; thou hast told us he should not be killed, and we obeyed thee; hadst thou told us we should restore him to the father, we would have obeyed thee.

Thus then Judah was separated from his brethren, and he married a wife, the daughter of a merchant,[2] and he had three children by her.

7 *And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord*, for he did not wish his wife to become pregnant, as she was very handsome, and would lose her beautiful looks, and hence "*The Lord slew him.*"

This was the sin of the generation at the time of the Deluge.

8 *And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother*, that they should be called after thy brother's name. Onan thought, "What! I should beget children to be called after my brother's name?" Therefore he also would not have his wife to become pregnant, and *the Lord slew him also.*

11 *Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown*, and

[1] Vide Exod. xxviii. 15–21. Yoshpeh consists of two Hebrew words יֶשׁ פֶּה, *i.e.* there is a mouth.

[2] A.V. A certain Canaanite.

he will marry thee. But he had no thought of giving her unto Shelah, because two of her husbands had died already, and he feared lest Shelah should die also, and the law is, if two husbands die, the woman may not marry a third.

The Ramban asks: Why did not Judah at once tell her that he would not give her Shelah, because her two husbands had died? The answer is: Shelah was in duty bound (by law) to marry her; but Judah thought, because he was yet young and incompetent to have children, perhaps he also would die like his brothers.

When Tamar saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife, she put off her widow's garments, assumed a fine dress, covered herself with a veil, and sat in an open place on the road by which Judah had to pass, for she was anxious to have children by Judah. And Judah passed by her, and took her to be an harlot, not recognising her, because she had covered her face. Thus writes Rashi.

But another explanation is: Because she was very modest, she was in the habit of covering her face when at the house of her father-in-law, and therefore he did not recognise her that she was Tamar. From this we learn that a man should be in the habit of (personally) knowing his female relatives, in order not to fall into sin with *them*. And Judah said:

16, etc. *Go to, I pray thee*, etc. "Get ready; I will come in unto thee." She said, "What wilt thou give me for it?" And he said, "I will send thee a kid from the flock." And she said, "Give me a pledge." And he said, "What pledge shall I give?" Tamar said, "Thy signet-ring, thy staff, and thy fringed garment;" for she thought, when I take hold on the fringed garment, the fringes will (miraculously) strike him on the face, (admonishing him) not to commit adultery; as it once happened that one gave a harlot four hundred gulden for her hire, but when he came to her, the fringes struck him on the face, till he separated himself from her.[1]

[1] The details of this legend may be seen in the Talmud, *Minachoth*, fol.

Tamar took in pledge these three things to prove that her intention was not that of a harlot, but of a pious daughter of Israel, about to be married with the usual nuptial canopy and consecration.[1] She took the signet in place of the wedding ring (in token of formal and legal consecration); the staff was the support of the nuptial canopy; and the fringed garment as a covering of the canopy. It is still the custom in Germany to make the Chupah (the Baldachin or nuptial canopy) of a (Tallith) garment with fringes.

18 *And he gave it to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him;* and it is therefore said, And she conceived *to him,*[2] *i.e.* she gave birth to him such righteous men as he was.[3]

19–24 *Tamar went home and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid, to receive the pledges from her, but she was not found . . . It was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot, and she is with child. And Judah said, Let her be burned.* Rashi writes:

44A. An English translation of the same will be found in the Library of the British Museum (also in a few private libraries), in the *unpublished* edition of my *Gen. acc. to the Talmud*, p. 106.

[1] חופה וקדושין.

[2] ותהר לו.

[3] Meaning that Pharez and Zarah, in spite of their illegitimacy, were equal in piety to Judah, and were quite as righteous as he.

Though bastards were forbidden to enter the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation (Deut. xxiii. 2), yet the Talmud tells us that ממזר ת"ח קודם לכ"ג עם הארץ. A *learned* bastard is higher than a high priest who is *not learned;* and that בסף מטהר ממזרים, money makes even bastards legitimate. *Horayoth*, fol. 13A; *Kiddushin*, fol. 71A.

In *Ben Sira*, a little Hebrew book published at Leghorn about fifty-three years ago, by Rabbi Solomon Zalman, on the very first page we are seriously informed that Ben Sira, Rav Pappa and Rabbi Zira were born out of wedlock by *immaculate conception*, and "*all* were very pious, perfectly righteous, and great sages in the Law."

Among other curious apothegms in the Talmud, the following runs thus רובן של ממזרים פקחים, *Most bastards are cunning. Sophrim*, chap. xv. Hal. 10. We often hear one Jew address the other: "What a bastard you are!" meaning: *What a cunning fellow you are!*

She was the daughter of Shem, who was a priest, and a priest's daughter committing adultery is to be burned.

The Ramban says: In some countries it is the common practice, when a married woman is unfaithful, she is given up into the hands of her husband to do with her as he pleases; and as Tamar was virtually like a married woman, for Shelah had to marry her, therefore he ordered her to be burned.

25 *When she was brought forth to be burned, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these three things are, am I with child.* For she thought, if Judah will confess, well and good; if not, let me be burned rather than put him to shame. From this have our sages learned, that better is it for a man to throw himself into a fiery furnace than that he should bring shame upon his neighbour in public.[1]

The Baal Hatturim says: Judah did not order Tamar to be burned, but to be branded on her face, the mark of a harlot.

*Discern I pray thee:* Tamar said, "Recognise, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet-ring, and the staff, and the Tallith, or fringed garment."

26 *And Judah recognised (them) and said: She is right! from me has she conceived.* Rashi writes: A Bath-Kol from God, *i.e.* (a voice from heaven) had said: "Even thus *I willed it*, that Judah should be with Tamar, in order that pious men should come from her; because she was a modest (or virtuous) woman when at the house of her father-in-law, therefore shall she be the ancestress of kings of Israel."[2]

The Ramban writes: Judah said, "*She hath been more righteous than I!* for my intention was adultery; hers was to perform the precept of the *Levirate Law*," for it was the custom for any relation, even a father-in-law, to observe the Levirate Law. Thus writes also the Chizkûni: The reason why they did not burn Judah for committing incest with his daughter-in-law

[1] *Berachoth*, fol. 43B.

[2] Tamar was counted worthy to be the ancestress not only of kings, but also of prophets, and Isaiah descended from her. *Soteh*, fol. 10B.

was, because, she having no children, it was lawful for him to marry her. Such was the custom at that time.

The Chizkûni gives also another explanation: Because Tamar was yet a virgin, and (in fact) not yet the wife of his children, therefore he might lawfully have married her.

Yet another explanation gives the Chizkûni: Judah said, "Tamar *was right;* for fear lest Shelah would do as his brothers, and she never have any children, she was right to wish to have children from me."

Another explanation is: "*She is right*, from me;" *i.e.* on account of me she must remain right; for if I in the least condemn her, the same condemnation extends also to me.

The B'chai quotes a Midrash, that Sam the wicked [1] had hidden away the three pledges, that Tamar should not find them, that she might be killed. Tamar then prayed unto God that three souls might not be lost, namely she herself, and her twin children. God (heard her prayer and) sent the angel Gabriel, who found the pledges, and produced them before the judges.

*And he knew her again no more.* He was afraid, because she had been the death of her two previous husbands, and he was also ashamed, because she was his daughter-in-law. So writes the Chizkûni.

But some of the sages say: That the meaning of the text is, He no more left off knowing her.

27, 28, etc. *And, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass . . . that the one put out his hand, and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread,* as a sign that this is the firstborn: This came out first. Afterwards he drew back his hand and his brother came out, and he was called Pharez, that is, Breaking forth with force, that is to say, before his brother. Then came out the child with the scarlet thread, and they called him Zarah, that means, "to shine," because the scarlet thread was shining upon him.

[1] This is the abbreviation of Sammael, the wicked angel. See p. 198, note, *ante.*

CHAPTER XXXIX.—1 *And Joseph was brought down into Egypt*, into the house of Potiphar, and everything he did prospered in his hand.

3 *And his master saw that the Lord was with him.* Rashi says: This means that the master noticed how Joseph continually mentioned the Name of God.

Another explanation is: God placed continually a cloud near Joseph, which followed him about whither he went, and thus the master observed that God was with him.

4, 5 *And he made him overseer over his whole house*, and over his treasures. And the Lord blessed the master for the sake of Joseph. And the master entrusted to him *all he had in the house, and in the field*, taking no account of him, because he saw that the Lord was with him.

The B'chai says: That which the text expresses, "*in the house, and in the field*," shows that Joseph was one year in the house of Potiphar, as one works six months in the field and six months in the house. After that he was twelve years in prison; in all, from the time he left his father till he became a ruler, was thirteen years. Joseph ought to have been only eleven years in the house of Potiphar, as the eleven stars indicated that in eleven years he would be a ruler; but because he trusted to the chief butler that he would mention him to Pharaoh and set him free from prison, and had not relied on God to help him, therefore he was two years more in prison.

6 *Save the bread which he did eat.* Rashi says: The master placed everything in his hand except his wife. The Ramban and the Chizkûni say: The Egyptians do not allow a Jew to touch their bread, as it is said, "Because the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews";[1] hence it is said, "*And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand . . . save the bread which he did eat.*"

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: "*The Lord made all that he*

[1] Chap. xlii. 32.

*did to prosper in his hand,*" means, on whatever thing Joseph laid his hand there was *luck* in it.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac gives another explanation: It is customary for a merchant sometimes to reserve his goods in order to derive profits from the same; but Joseph had great luck, so that his goods passed quickly from his hands.

The Ramban gives another explanation: The master found that Joseph took nothing from what was his, "*save the bread which he did eat,*" and he did not follow any pleasures, although he had all in his hand, such was his faithfulness to his master.

*And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.* He was very handsome, and on that account the wife of Potiphar wished for his company.

The Midrash says: Joseph, noticing that his master had a great regard for him, he began to adorn himself. God said, "Thy father mourns, and thou adornest thyself? I will set thy master's wife on thee, and by that means thou shalt come into prison."

7, 8 *And she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife:* "My master is usually always with thee, and how shall I lie with thee?"

The Ramban writes: The text says, "*his master's wife,*" to show that although she was his master's wife, and Joseph had to fear her, in this case he feared her not, but feared God. The B'chai quotes a Midrash, that the image of his father appeared unto Joseph, and said unto him, "Thy brothers' names will be engraved on the (stones of the ephod) garment of the High Priest when he offers sacrifices, and if thou sinnest thy name shall not be engraven among theirs."[1]

[1] This is evidently borrowed from the Talmud, where it runs as follows: At that moment the image of his father appeared in the window, and cried, "Joseph, thy brothers' names will be engraved on the stones of the ephod, and thine among them; dost thou wish it to be erased? and dost thou wish to be called an associate of harlots?" As it is written (Prov. xxix. 3), "And he that associates with harlots, wastes his substance." Imme-

9 *But thee, because thou art his wife.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac gives this explanation: Joseph said, "My master hath given all he hath to my hand, even thee; when thou needest dress and ornaments thou must come to me, and I have the power to supply thee or not; 'but thee,' to lie with thee I have not the power, 'because thou art his wife.'"

The B'chai and the Toldoth Yitzkhac quote a Midrash, that the master's wife said unto him: "There is no one here, why wilt thou not (come)?" He replied, "Even widows and virgins are unlawful for us, how much more so thou as a married woman."

*And sin against God.* The Chizkûni observes: When she said, "There is no one here," he replied, "God knows all things." But Rashi says: Joseph replied, "Among you also it is forbidden to commit sin with a married woman;" for adultery was forbidden to the children of Noah.

10 *To lie with her, or to be with her.* Joseph would not lie by her in this world, nor be with her in the world to come; for he who lies by a married woman goes with her into hell.

The B'chai writes: There are three parties in the world considered virtuous—A landowner who duly pays the tithes, an unmarried man who lives among harlots and does not sin with them, and a poor man who restores a valuable thing entrusted to his care.[1]

Thus it was with Joseph; when only seventeen years of age he resided among the harlots in Egypt, and was virtuous and did not touch them. His master's wife dressed him in pretty shirts; in the morning a clean shirt, and in the evening another; and she flattered him, for she saw by the stars, that she would have children by Joseph. But the stars had indicated that he would have children by her daughter, for Joseph proselytised his master's daughter, and married her.

diately כמיד ותשב באיתן קשתו: ששבה קשתו לאיתנו: נעץ ידיו בקרקע ויצאה תאותו מבין ציפורני ידיו: *Soteh*, fol. 36B.

[1] *P'sachim*, fol. 113A, with some variation.

11 *And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business.* The Chizkûni remarks: That the text tells us of the piety of Joseph, in that he went in *on business only*, and that *at daytime*, when it is not customary to be with a strange woman; but his master's wife manifested great boldness, and was inclined to sin even at daytime.

Rashi says: *About this time* there was an Egyptian festival, and all went to their place of worship; but his master's wife pleaded inability to go, for she thought, now is the time to persuade Joseph, and she said unto him that there was nobody at home, and that it was a good time to lie with her, catching hold by his garment, and saying, "Thou must lie with me!"

12 *And he left his garment in her hand and ran out into the street.* Because they were alone in one room, therefore he ran out.

The B'chai says: That was a proper act on the part of Joseph in showing due honour to his master's wife, in that he did not force his garment out of her hand.

14 *And she called to her household.* The Chizkûni says: She called to her household and told them that Joseph took off his garments and wanted to violate her, but when she began calling for help, he left his garment and fled. When the master came and embraced and kissed her, she told him:

19 *After this manner did thy servant do to me*, and when I began to call he fled out.

20 *And he put him into prison.* The Chizkûni writes: They did not kill him, because there were no witnesses. The Gemara says: Joseph was brought before the king to be judged. The angel Gabriel disguised himself as a prince, and said to the king, "If the truth is to be ascertained, let both their garments be brought and examined; if her garments are torn, then he is guilty; but if his, then she is guilty." The priests who sat in judgment declared him innocent, because *his* garments were found torn; but, said they, if he be acquitted it will be a disgrace for the woman, who will be stigmatised as a harlot,

therefore let him remain in prison. Because the priests judged justly, Joseph gave them bread enough in the time of famine, when he became ruler.[1]

*And he was there in the prison* where the princes used to be confined, where it was quite light. And

21 *The Lord was with Joseph* in prison.

CHAPTER XL.—1 *After these words*, of Potiphar's wife, which made people talk a great deal about Joseph, God caused *the butler of the king and his baker to offend the king of Egypt*, in order that people should talk of them and forget Joseph. These the king imprisoned. But the butler was liberated, because his offence was not serious; a fly was found in the king's cup of wine, which could not be prevented, and possibly it might have fallen in while the the cup was in the king's hand. But the baker had more seriously offended; a lump of clay was found in his bread, and he was hanged.

These two royal officers were imprisoned in the same prison as Joseph, and the governor of the prison charged him to wait upon and serve them; and they continued a year in prison.

5 *And they dreamed a dream, each his own dream and the interpretation of his fellow's dream.*

6–8 *And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and behold they were sad. And he asked them, Why are ye so sad? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it*, because we are in prison. Thus writes the Chizkûni.

Joseph said: Tell me the dream, perhaps God will grant that I shall be able to interpret it.

9–14 *The chief butler told his dream to Joseph: In my dream a vine was before me.* And in the vine were three branches, and they blossomed and the grapes soon ripened. I took the grapes and pressed them into the king's cup which I gave into Pharaoh's hand. Joseph said: The three branches are three days, for yet in three days shall Pharaoh restore thee unto

[1] Chap. xlvii. 22.

himself, and thou wilt be a butler by him as heretofore. But think on me, and show kindness unto me, and cause me to be freed from this prison.

15 *For I was stolen from the land of the Jews*;[1] and because he was not ashamed to tell among the Egyptians that he was from the land of the Jews, therefore he was worthy to be buried in the Land of Israel.[2]

16–19 *When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good.* Rashi says: Because he dreamed of the interpretation, that the butler would come out of prison in peace.

And he said unto Joseph: I dreamed that I carried on my head three baskets of bread, and in the uppermost basket there were all manner of bakemeats for the king, and a bird was eating it. And Joseph said: The three baskets are three days, for yet in three days shall Pharaoh order thee to be hanged, and the birds will eat thy flesh.

20 *And it came to pass the third day* was the day when Pharaoh became king, and he made a grand banquet for his servants, and restored the butler to his former butlership, but he hanged the baker.

23 *The chief butler remembered not Joseph*, and the good he had done him in interpreting his dream favourably; he remembered not to do him some good turn for his kindness, *but forgat him.* And because Joseph trusted in the chief butler, he remained in prison two years longer. Hence let us learn to rely no more on any one but on God!

END OF SECTION IX.

CHAPTER XLI.—1 *And it came to pass at the end of two years*, of Joseph's punishment (because he trusted in the chief butler), Pharaoh dreamed a dream. The Chizkûni writes: That

[1] *Hebrews.* This is a liberty with the original text.

The Talmud says: Whosoever is buried in the Land of Israel, is buried, as it were, beneath the altar, etc. *Kethuboth*, fol. 111A.

but for his offence he would have had twelve tribes, like his father; but he lost ten, and had only two (Ephraim and Manasseh). And it was also (divinely) decreed that he should be ten years in prison, and an addition of two years, because he trusted in the chief butler. At the end of that time—

*Pharaoh dreamed, and behold, he stood over the river.*[1] The B'chai and the Toldoth Yitzkhac write: In the whole of this chapter, "Pharaoh *king of Egypt*," does not occur, because his fall came by means of this river. In the first of the ten plagues this river was turned into blood.[2] Hence in the dream of his standing by the river, *Pharaoh, king of Egypt*, is not mentioned, because, by this river his kingdom was spoiled. But as soon as mention is made of Joseph, that he is about to be a ruler, mention is also made of Pharaoh, as king of Egypt (ver. 46). In honour of Joseph he is called king; that is to say, he is a king and made Joseph a ruler, and Scripture shows us that his kingdom had an existence, because of Joseph's advice to him to provide corn for the famine.

It is not said that *he stood by the shore of the river*, but that he stood *over* the river,[3] because Pharaoh made himself god, and said that he was *over* the river, that is to say, he created it; and what he thought of, that he dreamed, that *he stood over the river.*

But God terrified Pharaoh with dreams, and made his wise men fools that they should not know the interpretation thereof, in order that Joseph should interpret it and become a ruler. And Pharaoh saw in the dream that—

2–7 *There came up out of the river seven cows, very fat and healthy, and fed on the bank. After that came up seven other cows*, lean and dry; and the seven lean cows swallowed the

[1] A.V. "*by*, the river." [2] Exod. vii. 20.

[3] It is not said in the text על שפת היאור, *i.e.* on the bank or margin of the river, but it is said על היאור, *over* the river, for it might so be rendered if it suits a purpose, as we have seen a similar instance in chap. xviii. 2, when it is stated that the angels stood עליו, *over* Abraham.

seven fat ones, and it could not be discovered that these were in the belly of those. Pharaoh woke up, and slept again, and dreamt a second time that seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, full and good, and after them sprung seven empty ones. And Pharaoh awoke and saw that it was a dream which needed to be interpreted.

The Chizkûni asks: Why is it not said of the first dream, "*And, behold, it was a dream,*" which also needed to be interpreted? The reply is: There was nothing so marvellous in the first dream, when the lean cows did eat up the fat ones, because *cows have mouths;* but the ears of corn having no mouths, it was a great marvel to Pharaoh when they swallowed up the other ears of corn, and it frightened him.

8 *And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled.* He was frightened and gasped for breath. The B'chai writes: Pharaoh had not forgotten his dream, like Nebuchadnezzar,[1] because, had Pharaoh forgotten his dream, and had he asked his wise men to find it out, then the chief butler would not have mentioned Joseph, for he would have thought, Joseph can only interpret a dream, but is unable to tell it, hence God caused that Pharaoh should not forget the dream.

Nebuchadnezzar would not tell the dream, for he thought, "If I tell the dream, then many wise men will interpret it, each in a different way, and I shall not know which is the true interpretation; therefore I will not tell it, and the wise man who can tell it, will certainly be able to interpret it." Thus write the Chizkûni, the Toldoth Yitzkhac and the Imrae Noam. The last two give also another explanation: Nebuchadnezzar's dream referred to a distinct future of several thousand years, and if Daniel had to interpret only, Nebuchadnezzar would not have believed him, for he would have said, "Who can tell if this be true?" Now when Daniel told the dream itself, his interpretation was accepted as true.

[1] Dan. ii. 5.

But Pharaoh's dream referred to a time near at hand, and the interpretation could be tested whether it were a true one or not; hence Pharaoh did not forget the dream.

The Toldoth Yitzkhac further asks: Why did not Pharaoh kill the wise men who could not tell the interpretation, whilst Nebuchadnezzar killed his wise men who did not know the dream? The answer is this: The wise men of Nebuchadnezzar consulted the king to slay the (Jewish) priests who, if he had not killed them, would have told him the dream by means of the Urim and Thummim; therefore said Nebuchadnezzar, "It was through you that I killed the priests, tell me therefore the dream, if not, I will kill you."

9, 12 *Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh: I and the baker dreamed a dream in prison, and there was with us a young man, a Jew, a servant to the captain of the guard.*[1] Rashi says: The kindness of the wicked is not altogether hearty. The chief butler, who wished to do Joseph a kindness to get him out of prison, said, "He is *a young man*, and not fit to be a ruler; he is *a Jew*, and does not know our language; and he is *a servant*, and with us it is a law that no servant can be king."

The Chizkûni writes: The chief butler was afraid, if Joseph became a ruler, he would be angry with him, for having left him so long in prison, therefore he spoke evil of him.

It adds another explanation: The chief butler was afraid that Pharaoh would be angry, that such a respectable man should have been left so long in prison.

But the Toldoth Yitzkhac writes the contrary: The chief butler certainly desired to do a kindness unto Joseph, so that he should become a ruler; hence he said unto Pharaoh, that Joseph was a wise man and a prophet; he was a young man, and had not much learning, but he knew how to interpret a

[1] שר הטבחים. We give the rendering of this term as found in the A.V., but it might also be rendered: The chief cook, the chief butcher, or chief executioner.

dream, and therefore he must be a prophet. "Shouldst thou say, he is a necromancer, then I tell thee, that he is *a Jew*, to whom necromancy is forbidden. Shouldst thou say that he is of some high officials who study wisdom, then I tell thee, that he is a servant. Shouldst thou say that he is servant to a master who studies wisdom, then I tell thee, that he is servant to the chief butcher (A.V. captain of the guard), who never learnt wisdom."

13 *As he interpreted to us, so it was.* The Midrash Rabba says: A woman once came to Rabbi Eliezer and said, "Rabbi, I have seen in a dream that the beam of my house broke down." The Rabbi told her, "Thou wilt have a son, and he will live;" and as he interpreted so it was. On another occasion the same woman came to the school of Rabbi Eliezer to inquire the meaning of a similar dream. The Rabbi being absent, his disciples asked her to tell them the dream. And she said, "I dreamt that the beam of my house broke down." They interpreted this that her husband would die. The woman began to cry, and meanwhile the Rabbi arrived, and asked why she cried. The disciples told him the nature of her dream and of their interpretation of it. The Rabbi exclaimed: "Ye have killed this woman's husband, for all dreams follow the mouth," that is, according to the interpretation of a dream, so is the realisation of it, as it is said in the text: "*As he interpreted to us, so it was.*"[1]

*But there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh*, so that the interpretation should enter his heart. He dreamed the dream *with* its interpretation, but he only remembered

[1] Dreams play a great part in orthodox Judaism. A dream is the sixtieth part of prophecy, and he who passes seven nights without dreaming deserves to be called wicked. The Talmud has a good deal to say about good and bad dreams, and the Jewish Liturgy for the Festivals, whilst the priests spread out their hands to bless the people, supplies a very solemn prayer with special reference to dreams. "Lord of the Universe! I am thine, and my dreams are thine; I have dreamed a dream, and know not what it is," etc., etc.

the dream. The philosophers told him that he would have seven daughters, and seven daughters he would bury, but he could not accept this interpretation, for his heart palpitated (with fear).

The B'chai and the Toldoth-Yitzkhac ask: Why did not the wise men know that the cows were a sign of scarcity and plenty, for they are employed in ploughing; and then the ears of corn were a sign of veritable corn? The answer is: God made the wise men fools, that Joseph should come and tell the dream.

14 *And they brought him hastily out of the dungeon.* Our sages learn from this, that from trouble soon comes deliverance; from the dungeon he was made a ruler.

*And he shaved himself, and changed his raiment.* Rashi says: Although he did not know that he was about to be liberated from prison, yet he shaved himself in honour of royalty.[1]

15, 16 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream and interpret it. And Joseph answered, saying, It is not in me such wisdom, but may God send an answer by my mouth concerning the peace of Pharaoh,* that I should be able to tell thee the meaning of this dream.

The B'chai says: Pharaoh and his people imagined that the world was governed by the seven stars, and not by God; hence Pharaoh thought that the seven ears of corn indicated that the seven stars would bring plenty and famine; therefore Joseph first said, that God would answer respecting the peace of Pharaoh, that is to say, do thou not imagine that the stars do anything, but all things are done by God.

17, 18 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, seven cows fat and good-looking.* The B'chai asks: Why does Pharaoh state the dream to Joseph in terms different from

[1] It is strange that no explanation is offered of Joseph following a fashion contrary to the law of Judaism.

those employed before? The answer is this: The sages say, Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Thou hast not seen 'fat and good-looking,' but 'good-looking and fat;'" and Pharaoh marvelled and said unto Joseph, "Hast thou been in my dream, that thou knowest all things?" Hence it is said further on, that Pharaoh had said, "*Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this*," that is to say: God made it known unto thee what I have dreamed. And Joseph said:

25 *The dream of Pharaoh is one.* "Think not because thou hast dreamed of seven cows and then of seven ears of corn, that this is two dreams; it is but one dream, and God showeth by the seven fat cows and the seven full ears, seven years of plenty; and by the seven lean cows and empty ears is shown that after the seven years of plenty there will be seven years of famine."

32 *And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because God will shortly bring it to pass.* The Chizkûni asks: Joseph also dreamed *twice* respecting his brethren, why was not his dream *shortly* brought to pass? The answer is this: Joseph did not dream twice in one night; but Pharaoh having had both dreams in one night, they were speedily fulfilled.

33 *Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise*, who shall be able to provide the country with sufficient bread, and the rest should be sold (to other countries). He is a wise man who knows what is to be done to preserve the grain from rotting; and Pharaoh set that man over the land of Egypt to collect the gold and silver into the treasury of the king.

34 *Let Pharaoh appoint such a man, and let that man appoint officers* to collect corn. Each shall give a fifth part into the king's treasury. Though formerly a tenth was only given, now a fifth was needed, that the people should not have to starve in the time of famine.

35, 37, 38 *Let them gather all the food, and lay up corn*

. . . *And the counsel was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said, Is there to be found such a man as this in whom is the prophecy of God?* The Ramban writes: Because the Egyptians hate the Jew, so that when a Jew touches their bread they hold it for unclean, Pharaoh thought that the Egyptians would not approve the appointment of Joseph as Viceroy, and therefore he was obliged to state that amongst the Egyptians no such wise man was to be found.

39 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art;* therefore thou shalt be a lord over my people.

42 *And Pharaoh took off his signet-ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand,* and said, Thou shalt be ruler, *only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

The Chizkûni writes: Pharaoh thought to himself, "I will test Joseph, lest he does not give a true interpretation and seeks only to free himself from prison. I will therefore make him a prince, and if the interpretation be not true, he will not accept the position of a prince, because he could not retain it." *And he put a gold chain about his neck.*

43, 44 *And he made him ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Here rides the young ruler! And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Without thy knowledge none shall take up a sword in his hand.*

45 *And Pharaoh called Joseph's name, Zaphnath-paaneah,* which means, He reveals hidden things like a prophet.

*And he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah.* He was called Potipherah, because he crammed calves for the worship of the stars (idolatry); as also because he was a eunuch, * * * he became a priest, who has no wife.

The Chizkûni remarks: Joseph married the daughter of Potipherah, in order to prove that he was innocent in relation to his wife; for it would not then have been lawful for him to marry her daughter.

The Chizkûni and the B'chai write also: That Asenath was the daughter of Dinah, which she had by Shechem. Her brothers wished to kill her for the disgrace, but Jacob suspended on her a *Kamea*, or charm, on which he wrote: "He who marries her, let him know that he is matrimonially allied to Jacob;" and then he drove her from his house, and she hid herself among thorns, hence she is called Asenath or Osenath. *Sĕneh*, in the Holy Tongue, means, thorn. The angel Gabriel brought her into the house of Potipherah, whose wife adopted her for a daughter, and brought her up. When Joseph took a journey over Egypt, all women went out to meet him, and to admire his beauty. Each woman threw to him some article of adornment, but Osenath, having nothing else, threw to him the *Kamea*, which proving that she was a grandchild to Jacob, Joseph took her to wife. Subsequently, when Jacob came to visit Joseph in Egypt, he asked him, who were his children; and he showed him the *Kamea* which Jacob had written.[1]

48 *And the food of the field which was round about.* They took of the soil on which the corn grew and mixed it with the corn as a preventative of its becoming rotten.

50 *And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came.* * * * *

The Chizkûni writes: Was not Jochebed born in the gate of Egypt between the walls on their arrival in Egypt at the time of the famine? The answer is this: Joseph was obliged to separate himself (from matrimonial duties) because he knew the distress of his father and brethren, but when Levi saw that they were well off, and had no need of anything, therefore he did not separate himself from his wife; and he was not in duty bound to do so on account of Joseph's distress, for on account of an individual one need not separate. The Debek Tov says: Joseph having had all the corn in his hands, and heard the cry of the people, he was obliged to separate.

[1] The whole of this is a laboured attempt to gloss over the obvious but unwelcome fact, that Joseph married an alien.

55 *What he says to you, do.* Rashi, in reference to a Midrash, says: When the people came to Joseph, he said unto them, "My God will not feed those who are not circumcised, go therefore and be circumcised, and I will give you bread." They then went to Pharaoh and told him that Joseph bade them be circumcised. Pharaoh asked them: "Why have ye not collected corn in the years of plenty?" The reply was: "We have collected corn, but it became rotten. Pharaoh further asked: "Where is the bread which ye have baked?" They answered: "It has become rotten in the basket." Pharaoh then said, "Go therefore to Joseph, and be circumcised for the sake of bread, because what Joseph says, that must be; he ordered that the corn should become rotten, and it was so; and if he should decree that we die, we all must die!"[1]

The Baal Hatturim remarks: The word *Lachem, i.e.* (to you) has the same numerical value, ninety, as the word *Hamillah, i.e.* the circumcision, and then it is said: "*do*," that is to say, "He bids you to be circumcised, *Do!*" (do his bidding).

56 *And the famine was over all the face of the earth;* first it was hard upon the poor, and then also upon the rich. *And*

[1] Even the common talk of the disciples of the wise, says the Talmud, is worthy of study. This little sentence is proverbial among the learned Jews, and has an important significance on which it would be hard to enlighten an outsider, who probably will smile or sneer when he reads the above paragraph, apparently so stupid, or at least, only common talk of the disciples of the Rabbis. The orthodox Jew, however, sees in this paragraph what others are unworthy to see. He sees in Joseph a type of the modern orthodox Jew, and in Pharaoh of the modern kings and queens of the world. Pharaoh said to his people, "*What he says to you, do.*" Virtually the nations of the world are told the same by their respective reigning sovereigns, because the sons of Jacob have the sinews of war and the granaries at their disposal—life and death is in their hand—and Pharaoh said, significantly hints our commentator in the above paragraph, "*if he should decree that we die, we all must die.*" Yes, we must die, for it is written (Job xxii. 28), "Thou shalt also decree a thing (here on earth), and it shall be established unto thee" (from heaven). See *Taanith*, fol. 23A.

*the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt*, for what they did eat, did not satisfy their belly.

CHAPTER XLII.—1 *When Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt.* It ought to have been said, he *heard;* but he saw prophetically that he had a *hope* in Egypt, for the word Sheber (*i.e.* corn) also means *hope.*[1]

*Jacob said to his sons, Why do ye* (*look one upon another?* A.V.) *make yourselves lean* and are unwilling to go to Egypt for corn? Thus writes Rashi.

Rashi gives another explanation: Why should you appear before the children of Esau and of Ishmael as if ye were satiated? For though ye have yet enough corn, ye ought to go to Egypt for corn for the sake of (other) people. Thus writes also the Chizkûni.

The B'chai on behalf of Rabbi Chananel writes: Jacob said unto his children, "Why are ye to be seen together? Separate yourselves one from another."

The Ramban writes: Jacob said, "Why should ye be seen here? Why will ye not go for corn?"

The Midrash writes: Jacob told them, "Ye should not *all* enter by *one* gate, lest ye be under the influence of an *evil eye*, for ye are mighty and handsome people."[2]

3 *The brethren of Joseph were ten.* It is said *the brethren of Joseph*, and not "the sons of Jacob," because they had repented

[1] שֶׁבֶר in Hebrew means *corn*, but by changing the punctuation of the first letter and the vowel points of the word, שֶׁבֶר becomes שִׂבֶר; the meaning of the first is *corn*, and of the second *hope;* thus completely altering the sense of the text. Strange, that a Jewish transcriber of the Law would rather chop off his hand than alter "one jot or one tittle" of a letter, but the expounder of the Law constantly alters the true meaning of Scripture. Thus, to this day, they "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matt. xxiii. 24). If they deal so with their sacred writings, what can be expected of them in their general literature? "I would rather believe a Hottentot than a Jew," said the late Captain Layard, who knew what he said, for he had much dealing with our Hebrew brethren.

[2] In consequence of being looked upon with an *evil eye*, it is believed the strong and handsome man may become weak and ugly.

having sold their brother, and they said, "We will ransom him for much money, if we find him."

The B'chai says: They therefore went ten in number, that they might be able to have Minyan[1] for prayer that God would send to them their brother Joseph.

The Ramban writes: They went ten brothers, because the first dream was to be fulfilled, that the brothers alone should bow down to him. When Joseph saw that Benjamin was not with them, he thought that if the dream was to be fulfilled, *eleven* brothers must bow down to him; but as there were not yet all the eleven, he would not make himself known to them, and contrived so to treat them as to force them to bring Benjamin to make up the number eleven, and thus to solve the first dream. He hoped that the second dream would also soon be fulfilled by the coming of his father and mother.[2] Had not the fulfilment of the dreams been Joseph's particular aim, he would not have distressed his brethren and his father. He would have sent a letter to comfort his aged father with the tidings that he was alive and a ruler in Egypt, from whence to Hebron, where Jacob resided, was only six day's journey. Had the distance been a thousand miles off, Joseph would still have

[1] Minyan (מִנְיָן) means a legally convened congregation of *not less than ten* adult males: women, slaves and minors, be their number ever so great, are not considered fit to be members of a Jewish congregation. Ten men, and never less, is the orthodox minimum for a congregation. The Talmud says, in *Meggillah*, fol. 3B: What entitles a place to rank as a large town? כל שיש בה עשרה בטלנין, *i.e.* When there are in it *ten Batlanim*, less than that number the place is only a village. Now in places where there are not *ten Batlanim*, *i.e. idlers* or *men of leisure*, always free and ready to form a Minyan, without which no public worship can be held, a Minyan has often to be *hired* by the year, or only by the week, in order to secure a legal congregation to have public worship. Much money is expended every year by the synagogues to hire worshippers, and we may be sure hired worshippers are very regular in attending the morning and evening prayers! and very few synagogues are shut up for want of a congregation. "But money answereth all things." Ecc. x. 19.

[2] His mother was dead!

sent a letter to his father, but he saw that the fulfilment of the dream in their land was impossible, for his father and brethren would not bow down to him there. "But because I am ruler in in Egypt," said he, "and they would not recognise me, there can be no humiliation on their part to bow down to me." Especially when he saw that there was a great famine in all countries, and they would be obliged to come to him.

5 *And the sons of Israel came among those that came*, for they disguised themselves, to escape being looked upon with an *evil eye.*

6 *And Joseph was governor over the land* of Egypt; he sold corn. The Ramban says: He himself sold the corn. He ordered all granaries to be locked up except the one which he himself attended, in order that his brethren should have to come to him alone personally, for he himself received the money from the hands of each.

The Ramban gives yet another explanation: Joseph himself did not sell corn, but he commanded the governors to open stores of grain separately in every land, and the children of Jacob were sent as deputies from the whole land of Canaan, to arrange that a store should be opened in their land.

7 *And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them.* Fearing lest they should know him also, he put on a *Turkish*[1] head-dress and covered his forehead and part of his face, and spoke very roughly unto them and with anger. He asked them, "Whence are ye?" They replied, "From the land of Canaan." Then he knew right well that they were his brethren, and hence it is again repeated.

8 *And Joseph knew his brethren*, for now he recognised them thoroughly. The Chizkûni says: He thoroughly recognised them because they called each other by their names. Fearing to make himself known unto them lest they should disperse in the world and not return to their father, he thought (of a plan) that they should bring Benjamin.

[1] Though there were no Turks there.

*But they knew him not*, because when he departed from them he was beardless, and now he had a beard;[1] they were recognised by him because they had beards when they parted with him. So says Rashi.

But the Ramban says: Because Joseph expected that his brethren would come, therefore he searchingly looked at them and recognised them; but his brethren did not expect Joseph to be the ruler of Egypt, and therefore they did not scrutinize him, and they *knew him not.*

The Chizkûni says: Because Joseph had assumed the name Zaphnath-paaneah, therefore *they knew him not;* but they having retained their old names, he knew them.

The Midrash says: *Joseph knew his brethren;* when they fell into his hands he pitied them as a brother, but when he fell into their hands, *they knew him not* to have pity on him as on a brother, and they sold him.

9 *And Joseph remembered the dreams.* When he saw his brethren bow down to him, he thought, now are my dreams being fulfilled. And he said unto them: "*Ye are spies, to see the nakedness of the land are ye come.*"

The Midrash, and also Rashi, and the Chizkûni, and the B'chai write: Joseph had given strict orders that none should be admitted through any gate, till his own and his father's name, and his place of abode were written down. Every evening the guards brought the written reports, as to who entered the city, unto Joseph. When the sons of Jacob arrived, each entered through a separate gate writing down his own and his father's name. In the evening ten books, with the names of the ten sons of Jacob, were brought unto Joseph, and he at once ordered that all the grain stores except one should be closed, to the manager of which he gave the books with the following order: "When these men come unto thee, send them to me." The manager waited three days, but they came not. Then Joseph took ten mighty men from the house of

[1] *Yevamoth*, fol. 88A.

Pharaoh, and ordered them to search all Egypt for his brethren, and they were found in the market of harlots, where they searched for Joseph. They thought, because he was so very handsome, he probably was bought for immoral purposes. The ten mighty men took hold of them and brought them unto Joseph, and he said unto them? "*Ye are spies, to see the nakedness of the land ye are come*, to see how to conquer it, for ye entered it by ten different gates."

The B'chai says: Joseph took a cup and tapped on it, and said, "My cup tells me that ye are spies." They replied, "Our father ordered us not to enter together through one gate." Joseph then asked them, "What were ye doing in the market of harlots?" They replied, "We lost something, and we searched for it there." He then said, "My cup again tells me that two of you have killed all in the city of Shechem." They were then much frightened, and said, "We are twelve brethren, and our father sent ten to buy corn, because, on account of the famine, there are many robbers on the road; and were we strong, two of us would have been enough to send."

The Toldoth-Yitzkhac asks: What kind of answer was this? Joseph charged them that they were spies, and to this charge they replied: "*We are all one man's sons!*" The answer is this: They said, "*We are all one man's sons;* is it conceivable that a father would send all his children when there was danger of their being taken for spies? he would send only one." Joseph said:

14 *That is that I spake unto you, that ye are spies*, for spies would not receive a stranger among them for fear lest, when caught and tortured, he should betray all the rest, whereas one brother would give his neck and not betray the others.

Another explanation is this: Because they stated that one, "*the youngest is with our father, and one is not*," therefore Joseph said, "The one must be a pious man and obeys his father, not to be a spy; but ye are scorners and disobedient to

your father, for if ye were not spies your brother would also have come. *By the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go forth hence, (except your youngest brother come hither).*"

Another explanation is this: Joseph asked them, "Should you find Joseph, and much money is demanded for him, would ye ransom him?" They replied, "We will ransom him for any amount of money that may be asked." Joseph then said, "Supposing they should not wish to give him up to you, what would you do?" They said, "We would give our necks for that." Joseph then said, "*That is that which I spake unto you, that ye are spies.*"

The B'chai writes: That what Joseph swore by the life of Pharaoh, that they were spies, *that was false;* but that which he swore, that they *should not go forth hence*, that was *true*, for he meant that *all* should not go forth, for one was to be kept behind as a pledge. Joseph said:

16-20 *Send one of you and let him fetch Benjamin your youngest brother*, but ye shall be kept in prison till he is brought hither, and thus we shall see that ye are not spies; and he imprisoned them all. On the third day Joseph came unto them and said: "*I fear God!* therefore let one of you remain in prison, and ye all go to your father and carry the corn, but bring your youngest brother unto me." *And they did so.* The B'chai says: They all said, "We are prepared; take of us any one thou pleasest."

24 *And he took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.* This he did to frighten them; but as soon as they had left he unbound him and gave him to eat and to drink. He took Simeon, because Simeon had with his own hands thrown him into the pit.

Another explanation is this: Joseph thought to himself that it is desirable to have Simeon separated from Levi, because they two being such mighty men as to be able to slaughter the whole city of Shechem, he feared lest they might kill him also.

The Chizkûni writes: Joseph had had the intention to take

Reuben, because he was the eldest brother, as it is customary to take the leader of a guilty company; but as Reuben had said, "*Shed no blood*," and as Joseph had heard that Reuben and his brethren had repented of their having sold him, he therefore did not take Reuben.

The B'chai writes: *And took from them Simeon.* Joseph himself took Simeon, but the brethren would not give up any one of them as a hostage. From this we learn, that if a highwayman says: "Give up one of you to be killed, if not I will kill you all," they should give themselves all up to be killed rather than one to be slain.

*And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul,* when we had thrown him into the pit, and he prayed to us to let him go, *and we would not hear.*

The B'chai says: These pious men knew their sins, and they repented, and from this it is to be inferred that they did not sell him, but only threw him into the pit, otherwise they could not have accomplished their repentance till they had ransomed him.

The Toldoth-Yitzkhac asks: Why they had not repented whilst they were in prison; why had they done so after they were set free? The answer is this: Because Joseph had said, "I fear God, and will not afflict you." They then said, "He is an idolater, and yet he has compassion on us (strangers); and we are Jews, and Joseph was our own brother, and yet we had no pity on him."

22 *And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required.* "Although we did not kill him with our own hands, in the sight of God it is as if we had done so, because we knew that he was not accustomed to suffer affliction (and we have bitterly afflicted him)." All this they spake in the holy tongue. And

23 *They knew not that Joseph understood* (the holy tongue),

*for he spake unto them by an interpreter.* Joseph had his son Manasseh as interpreter between him and his brethren. As he himself did not speak to them, they thought that Joseph did not understand the holy tongue. When Joseph heard that his brethren repented having sold him, he turned away and wept.

25 *Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn,* without measure, and to lay the money under the corn without their knowledge. The second time Joseph commanded the restoration of their money, and provision for their journey, to show them that he had no hatred towards them, and that he only wished they should bring their brother.

27 *And as one of them opened his sack.* On the road Levi opened his sack to feed his ass, and he espied the money in his sack; and all the brethren were afraid, and exclaimed, "*What is this that God hath done unto us?* that our money is in our sacks!"

When they came to their father they told him all, and he said unto them, "Ye have killed me!"

36 *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take away Benjamin also;* for he suspected that they had sold Simeon, and wished to sell Benjamin also.

37 *And Reuben said unto his father, Slay my two sons, if I bring not Benjamin to thee again; deliver him into my hand.* Jacob replied: "Thou art a firstborn fool! If Benjamin does not return, should I slay my grandchildren also? They are as dear to me as my own children."

The Toldoth-Yitzkhac writes: Reuben said, "*Slay my children;*" so that if Jacob should say, "They are also my children," he should be able to reply, "and Benjamin is my *brother,* and a brother is a *nearer relation* than a grandchild. Brother with brother is first with first (degree); but a grandchild and his grandfather are first and second; therefore, as a matter of course, I will take good care and bring Benjamin back." But Jacob did not give heed to these words.

CHAPTER XLIII.—9 *I will be surety for him.* Judah reasoned with his father: "If Benjamin go with us there is indeed a doubt whether he will return; but if he does not go with us to bring corn, and it is impossible for us to go without him, then it is quite certain that *we shall all die of hunger;* therefore it is better that Benjamin should go with us. *I will be surety for him.* I am surety to bring thee Benjamin and place him before thee, and if not, let me be sinful all my days. And *had we not lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.*"

The B'chai writes: The brethren suffered hunger, but waited till the father himself consented for them to take with them Benjamin. And Jacob told his children these five things: 1. They should take a handsome present of fruit and good wine to honour the lord of Egypt. 2. They should take double the amount of money taken before, lest the price of corn had risen. 3. To take with them the money they found in their sacks, lest the Egyptians had forgotten (to retain it). 4. To take Benjamin with them; and 5. To pray.

14 *And God Almighty give you mercy and grace before the man who is set over the corn, that he may send away your other brother* out of prison, that is, Simeon. He did not utter the name of Simeon, because he hated him for the slaughter at Shechem, and if he had had corn he would not have sent Benjamin, and would rather have left Simeon in prison. So writes the Ramban.

Rashi writes: "*Your brother,*" refers to Simeon, "*other*" refers to Joseph. He thought, perhaps Joseph is yet alive, and he prayed that God might release him (if in prison). When the brethren came unto Joseph—

16 *And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home.* And he ordered Manasseh to slay a (clean) beast, for the children of Jacob do not eat without legal slaughtering; and ordered the *purging* of the sinews of the meat, as is the custom of the Jews.

*For these men shall dine with me at noon.* The B'chai says: Princes and judges dine at noon, for they have not the time to eat early.

18 *And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house;* for it was not to be expected that travellers should put up at Joseph's house; and they said among themselves, "It must be on account of the money which we found in our corn, that he may have an occasion against us to take us for bondmen, and our asses."

19–23 *And they came to the steward of Joseph's house and said:* "We pray thee, we bought corn here before, and when we came to an inn, we each found his money in his sack, and now we have brought back that money, and other money to buy corn. We know not who put the money in our sacks." The steward said, "Fear not, your God, and the God of your fathers, hath given you the money; but the money for the corn came to my hand." *And he brought Simeon out unto them.*

25 *And they made ready the present,* and when Joseph came they bowed down to him and presented it. He asked them whether their father was in good health, and they said that he was; and they again bowed down to him, because he was so gracious as to ask after their father's health.

29–32 *And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and he asked, Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me?* They said, "This is he." *And he said: God be gracious unto thee my son.* He was greatly touched with compassion over Benjamin, and he entered into a chamber, where he wept. Then he washed his face and came out and ordered to lay the table, for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians of his household by themselves, for the Egyptians do not eat with a Jew, because the Jews eat mutton, whilst the Egyptians worship sheep.

33 *And they sat before him, the first according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth.* Joseph took the

cup in his hand, tapping on it, and calling out: "Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, being of one mother, take your seats together"; and so with the rest. When he came to Benjamin he said: "Thou hast no mother and I have no mother, sit next to me." And the brethren marvelled one at another. The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: They wondered from what nation he was, "For," said they, "he does not eat with us, nor with the Egyptians."

34 *And he took and sent messes unto them from before him;* and to Benjamin he gave five messes: one portion such as the brethren received, one portion Joseph gave him, and one Osenath gave, and Manasseh and Ephraim gave him each a portion, making in all five times as much as the others had.

*And they drank and were merry with him.* The brethren were tipsy with Joseph; for Joseph had vowed never to drink wine till he should see his brethren and knew if his father were still alive. Now having seen and heard what he wanted to know, he indulged in wine. The brethren had also vowed to abstain from wine till they learned where Joseph was, and although, as yet, they did not know this, they drank wine out of fear, lest Joseph should charge them to be spies, who fear to drink in order not to let out their secrets. Hence out of fear of danger they drank wine.

CHAPTER XLIV.—1 *And he commanded the steward of his house to fill their sacks with corn, as much as they can carry,* more than the value of their money, *and he put every man's money into his sack.* And they should be told, "Because Joseph has suspected you as spies, he therefore begs you to accept the money, and to forgive him."

The Ramban and the B'chai write: Had the money been put into the sacks without their knowledge, as in the case of the cup, they would have been able to plead: "We have not stolen the cup, but it came into our sacks without our knowledge, just as the money which we gave into thy hands came into our sacks."

Joseph had ordered the cup out of which he drank to be put into the sack of Benjamin. The Chizkûni says: He gave this order, because he thought perhaps the brethren had brought a stranger in the place of Benjamin; hence he ordered that the cup should be found with him, and if they offered their necks for him, then he would be sure that it was Benjamin. [1]

3 *As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away.* Our sages learn from this: That a town should be left when it is already light of day, and a town should be entered when it is light of day. [2]

4 *And not yet far off.* Joseph ordered to pursue them, in order that they should not have the trouble of returning from a distance, *and say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good* by stealing the cup?

5 *Verily this is the cup in which my lord drinketh,* and he who stealeth from a king's table is guilty of death.

*And whereby indeed he divineth.* And whereby he practises witchcraft, and it is highly prized by him.

The Ramban says: The pursuer told them, "That my lord consulted the soothsayers, and they informed him that the cup is with you." The brethren answered, "Is it likely we should steal the cup, when we restored the money we found in our sacks."

9 *With whomsoever thou findest the cup, let him die, and also we will be thy lord's bondsmen.* The pursuer said, "It is true, when stolen property is found with a company, all ought to be taken for bondsmen, but I will deal kindly with you," and

10 *He with whom the stolen cup is found shall be my servant,*

[1] This is a really ingenious suggestion; but it quite overlooks the fact that Joseph had recognised Benjamin, as he had recognised the other ten brethren. The real motive is betrayed in verses 16, 17: "He with whom the stolen cup is found shall be my servant;" Joseph's first idea being to keep his own brother back and let the others go.

[2] Rashi in *Taanith*, fol. 10B.

*and ye shall be blameless*, and free to depart in peace to your father.

The Ramban says: The brethren spake thus, "When stolen property is found with one of a company, all the rest are not guilty; but we are eleven brothers, and if thou findest the theft with any one of us, we all shall submit to be servants." Then the pursuer said:

*Let it be according to your words.* "It is true, as you say, that when stolen goods are found with one of a company, all the rest are not guilty; therefore I will declare you not all guilty, but with whom I find the theft, him will I take for a servant."

12 *And he searched and began at the eldest, and ended with the youngest*, in order that they should not suspect that it was he who had put the cup into Benjamin's sack. *The cup was found in Benjamin's sack.* The brethren felt ashamed and beat him, and taunted him thus: "Thou wast born to be a thief, for thy mother Rachel stole Laban's images." But because they suspected him *without cause*, he was worthy of the Temple being built in his portion of land. *Ye have done evil in so doing.*

15 *Then they rent their clothes.* Because they caused their father to rend his clothes on account of Joseph, therefore God punished them measure for measure. But Benjamin, who rent his clothes without cause, became worthy that from him should descend Mordecai, who wore royal garments in the time of Ahasuerus.[1] The pursuer was Manasseh, and because he caused the brethren to rend their garments, his inheritance was torn and divided, so that his property was half beyond Jordan and half in the land of Israel.[2]

14 *And they fell before him on the ground.* The brethren, and Benjamin too, fell before Joseph to the ground, thus fulfilling the dream where the eleven stars worshipped him.

16 *What shall we say unto my lord?* "What shall we say

[1] Esther viii. 15. [2] Josh. xviii. 7.

respecting the money which first came into our sacks without our knowledge? *What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?* God has found occasion to punish us for our transgressions."

The Eben Shoab asks: Why did Joseph wish to send away his brethren without Benjamin, and thus distress his father? and why did he not at once make himself known that he was Joseph? The reply is this: Joseph knew that it was very difficult for Jacob to leave the land of Israel for the "*outside of the land*," therefore he himself did not wish to cause Jacob to come to Egypt; but as Judah had provoked him with harsh words, he felt obliged to make himself known. Through this accident Jacob came into Egypt, and Joseph thought that it was all from God, and that he was blameless. Jacob inquired of God whether he should go down into Egypt, and the Divine reply was, "*Fear not to go down into Egypt.*" For twenty-two years had God hidden from Jacob that Joseph was in Egypt, for it was not yet the time of the captivity of Egypt, because Isaac was yet alive. Jacob was not to come into Egypt, and this fact that Jacob could not come into Egypt on account of Isaac being yet alive was known to Joseph, hence he asked his brethren, "Is your grandfather well?"[1] This means to say: Joseph told his brethren that they were spies; they said that they were come from respectable people, Abraham and Isaac, hence he asked them, "Does your grandfather Isaac live yet?" to which they answered, "Thy servant, *our father, is yet alive*," thus giving him to understand that *the grandfather was not alive*, for they would not plainly communicate bad tidings. From this we learn that bad news should not be told plainly, but under disguise, as we find an example in

[1] Chap. xliii. 27. The accents on אביכם הזקן rather favours the reading of grandfather, though the context does not. Both the A.V. and the New Revision of the Old Testament seem to have overlooked the accents of the two Hebrew words, which ought to have been rendered "your aged father," and not "your father, the old man."

the Gemara, where it is stated that Rabbi Chiyah asked Rav, "Is my father alive?" he replied, "Thy mother is alive," in order that he should understand that his father was not alive.[1]

*Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: What need was there to say, "And he also with whom the cup is found" should be a servant? Could it have been otherwise? The answer is: They said, "God punishes us because we sinned in selling Joseph, therefore we will all be servants; and not only we, but he with whom the cup is found, though he was not present at the selling of Joseph, shall also be servant." And hence they said, "*both we*," that is to say, we also, who have done no sin in the matter of the cup, shall be servants.

17 *And he said, God forbid that I should do so*, and take you all for servants, but he in whose possession the cup is found shall be a servant, and ye go in peace to your father.

END OF SECTION X.

18 *Then Judah came near unto him.* Judah approached Joseph with soft words to soften his anger, as it is written: "A soft answer turneth away wrath;"[2] in order that Joseph should have compassion on them.

Judah, however, prepared himself to argue legally, either in kindly words or in warlike discussion, and hence he said: "In *me*, my lord!"[3] "In me wilt thou find all, either judgment, or kindly words, or if it comes to war thou wilt also be unable to prevail against me."

Another explanation is: Judah said, "*In me, my lord!* let the sin of the cup be. I will be servant in his place. And if

[1] *Vide* 2 Sam. xviii. 20–27. To this day the Jews are very particular as to the wording and manner of communicating to a friend or neighbour any bad news.

[2] Prov. xv. 1.

[3] In A. V. "Oh, my lord." But the original בִּי אֲדֹנִי literally means, "*In me*, my lord."

thou wilt ask, why I plead for him more than all the brethren, it is '*because thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, that I will bring him home;*' and thou art esteemed in my sight even as Pharaoh."

Another explanation is: "*Thou art even as Pharaoh.* If thou retainest Benjamin thou wilt be punished as Pharaoh was punished for retaining Sarah one night; he was smitten with leprosy, so likewise wilt thou be smitten with leprosy."

Another explanation is: "*Thou art even as Pharaoh,* who does not keep his word, and like him thou dost not keep thy thy word; for thou hast said that thou wilt do kindness unto Benjamin, but now thou art distressing him."

Another explanation is: "*Thou art even as Pharaoh.* If thou wilt provoke me I will kill thee with Pharaoh, and I will begin with thee!" Judah said unto Joseph, "Evidently from the first thou camest with a false pretext:"

19 *My lord asked his servants, Have ye a father, or a brother?* "What need hadst thou to ask us this? Did we seek to take a daughter of thee? But because thou didst ask, we told thee the truth, that we have an aged father and a younger brother, and one brother is *dead.*" In the former section (ch. xlii. 18) they said, "And one is not," *i.e.* he was lost; but now they feared to say: "and one is lost," lest Joseph should say: "Seek and search for him and bring him hither." Therefore they said: "We have learned that he is *dead.* Thou hast said: 'Bring hither your younger brother,' and we said: 'If the lad leaves his father, the father may die of sorrow, as well as the lad.' Thou then didst say: '*Ye shall not see my face, except your younger brother be with you.*'[1] When we came to our father and told him all this, he said:

27 *Ye well know that my wife bare me two sons,* Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph is not, and if ye take Benjamin also from me, and if, God forbid! some accident befalls him on the road, as it did to his brother, then I shall die of grief; because

[1] Chap. xliii. 3.

when Benjamin is with me, he comforts me for his mother and his brother, and if you lose him it will be to me as if they all three had died on one day."

The B'chai writes: Judah said unto Joseph, "Beware of my father, for he cursed Rachel who stole the images of Laban, and she died on the road in consequence; and if thou take away Benjamin he will curse thee also. Mind also, two of our brethren overthrew the city of Shechem on account of Dinah, who is *but a woman*, how much more will they destroy all Egypt on account of Benjamin, who is *a man!* and who is *holy*, because the Temple will be built on his share of the land. Therefore deliver him up to us!"

32 *For thy servant became surety for the lad, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then let me be sinful to my father* in both worlds, in this and in the world to come! Joseph replied, "I see by my cup that ye have sold a brother, why hast thou not been surety for him?" When Judah heard this, he said to Naphtali,[1] "Go and see how many markets and streets there are in Egypt." Naphtali went and came and said, "There are twelve markets." Judah said, "I take upon me three markets to kill all the people in them, and ye take each one market to destroy." The brethren said to Judah, "If thou destroy Egypt it will be as much as if thou destroy the whole world, for everybody lives by Egypt." Judah then began again to quarrel with Joseph, and said, "From the very first thou camest with a false accusation, and hast charged us that we were spies, and then that we stole the cup. I swear by my father, as thou hast sworn by Pharaoh, that I will draw my sword and strike off thy head! I will open my mouth and swallow thee up!" Joseph said, "I will stop up thy mouth with a stone." Judah: "The fire of Shechem yet burns within me, I will dye all Egypt with blood!" Joseph: "Ah yes, ye were dyers of old! Ye have dyed in blood the shirt of Joseph,

[1] Because he was more swift-footed than any of his brethren, and Jacob himself compares him to "*a hind set loose.*"

and ye told the father that a wild beast devoured him!" When he said this, all the brethren agreed to destroy Egypt. Joseph feared, and made himself known to them. He ordered out all who were present except the brethren, that they should not be put to the blush before the Egyptians that they had sold him. It would also have been a disgrace to him for the Egyptians to know that he had such brethren; and the Egyptians would not have allowed them to dwell in Egypt. He also ordered them out, because many officers of Pharaoh had interceded for Benjamin, and as he could not refuse them he ordered them out.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmaini says: Joseph was placing himself in great danger in ordering all out when he made himself known to his brethren. How is it that he did not fear that they might kill him and no one would have known about it?

The Midrash writes: Joseph said unto them, "Ye say Benjamin's brother is dead, I will show him to you;" and he began calling "Joseph!" His brethren looked about in every direction; and Joseph said, "Why do ye look about? I am Joseph." His brethren could not answer him for fear.

Rabbi Yochanan observes: If the brethren could not answer Joseph when he showed them their sin, how much more in the Day of Judgment, when God will show the people their sins, will they be unable to answer!

CHAPTER XLV.—3 *Doth my father yet live?* The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Although the brethren had already informed him that their father was alive, Joseph asked again, "*Doth my father yet live?*" because he thought the brethren would be in fear of their lives for having sold him; therefore he said (to reassure them), "My father is yet alive! Even Esau would do no harm to Jacob so long as Isaac was alive, in order not to distress him, how much more will I do you no harm (in order not to distress my father)!" When Joseph saw that they were troubled in his presence, he said:

4, 5 *Come near to me, . . . I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold thither,* Fear not, for God sent me here to nourish and to maintain you.

8 *So now, it was not you that sent me hither, but God.* And this ye can understand from the fact that ye sold me for a servant, but God made me ruler in Egypt.

*And they came near.* The B'chai says: Joseph addressed them: "I am Joseph your brother; though you sold me I am still your brother, and I will not lord over you." *And they came near him.*

The Eben Shoab writes: *And after that his brethren talked with him.* They requested him not to tell Jacob that they had sold him, for they feared he would curse them. And Jacob never knew it. Thus also writes the Ramban: for had Jacob known about the selling of Joseph, he would before his death have commanded Joseph to forgive them. Joseph did not make it known to his father lest he should curse the brethren.

9, 10 *Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, that God hath made me lord of all Egypt, and come immediately, and I will settle thee in the best of the land, that is Goshen.*

11 *And there will I nourish thee, lest thou come to poverty.* The Ramban writes: Joseph did not maintain his father in the land of Canaan, because he feared that the king with the princes would say that he intended to establish stores there and reside there.

12 *And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin,* that I am your brother, for I speak with you in the holy tongue (Hebrew).

The Chizkûni writes: Although the Egyptians had circumcised themselves for the sake of corn, yet the circumcision was a real sign that he was Joseph, because he was lord over the corn and was otherwise rich, and had no need to circumcise himself for the sake of corn. Hence he said, "*And, behold, your eyes see,* my glory, that I have no need to circumcise for

the sake of getting corn; thus it must necessarily be that I am a Jew, your brother."[1]

*And the eyes of my brother Benjamin.* He put the brothers on the same footing, meaning, "As I have no hatred against Benjamin, for he was not present when I was sold, so likewise have I no hatred against you."

The Chizkûni writes: Joseph said to the brethren, "If ye will not tell your father that I am alive, because you have sworn not to tell him, let Benjamin tell him, for he did not swear."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac asks: What was there for a sign in his speaking the holy tongue, for might not many Egyptians have been able to speak it? The answer is: Joseph said, "Go tell your father to come here, *for yet there are five years of famine*, and if ye do not believe it you can see with your eyes that the eleven sheaves, which intimated the eleven brethren, would bow down to me, has been fulfilled; and thereby you may know that what I say about the five years more of famine is also true. *It is my mouth that speaketh unto you;* that is to say, you can comprehend that what my mouth speaketh is true. Therefore bring my father to me, and I will maintain him."

Rabbi Israel writes: Joseph said, "*I am Joseph, doth my father yet live?*" That is to say, "I Joseph am yet alive, but I do not know if my father is yet alive with his prophecy; for if he be yet alive with his prophecy, he would have known that I am yet alive."

14 *And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept,* because the two temples that will be built in Benjamin's portion of land will be destroyed. *And Benjamin wept upon his neck,* because of the destruction of the Tabernacle of Shiloh, which was to be in Joseph's portion of land.[2]

[1] In *Avoth d'Rab. Nathan*, chap. ii. it is stated that Joseph and Balaam, among others, were *born circumcised*, though Balaam was a Gentile and not a Jew.

[2] *Meggillah*, fol. 16B.

15 *Moreover he kissed all his brethren*, to show that he had no hatred against them.

16 *And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, that Joseph's brethren were come*, and Pharaoh and his princes rejoiced, for till now they were ashamed, thinking that Joseph, a servant, was ruling over them; but now, seeing that he had worthy brethren, and a much esteemed father, it pleased them well.

The Midrash writes: *And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house.* When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, they wanted to kill him. An angel came and threw them about in every corner of the house. Judah began to roar, and all the walls in Egypt tumbled down. Other evils happened; Pharaoh was thrown from his throne and all the mighty men of Egypt were terrified.

17 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, Lade your beasts and go, get you unto the land of Canaan.* Pharaoh knew that Joseph was meek and scrupulously trustworthy, and that of himself he would send nothing, hence he ordered that corn should be sent into the land of Canaan, and to bring Jacob and his household into Egypt.

18 *And ye shall eat the fat of the land.* The sages say: Pharaoh prophesied that when Israel should be redeemed (delivered from captivity) they would empty the land of Egypt of all that is valuable.[1]

21 *And Joseph gave them wagons.* Joseph gave them a sign to take to Jacob by which he would believe that he was Joseph. When Jacob accompanied Joseph (on the occasion when he sent them to visit his brethren), he taught him that it was a meritorious act to accompany a traveller, to protect him from robbers on the way. Hence says the Torah: If one be found slain in the land, the nearest people shall behead a

[1] *Vide* Exod. xii. 35, 36. There was not a single individual in Israel who had not ninety Libyan donkeys laden with the gold and silver of Egypt. *Bechoroth*, fol. 5B.

heifer as an atonement, and say: We have not shed this blood,[1] for we have accompanied the traveller and have given him bread for the journey. Hence says the text: *And Joseph gave them heifers;* that is to say, he sent to his father a sign, viz. that he taught him the law of the beheaded heifer when he took his departure from him.

22 *To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment,* because they all rent their garments about the cup, and they were ashamed to wear them.

*But to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver,* because he was not present at the selling of Joseph. To the brethren he gave no money in lieu of a fine. When one sells a man for a slave he must give (a fine) thirty pieces of silver,[3] and as they were ten brothers, the amount of the fine due was three hundred pieces, which sum he gave to Benjamin. So write the B'ḥai and the Chizkûni.

But the Toldoth-Yitzkhac writes: He gave three hundred pieces of silver, because he spoke three evil things before his father against his brother, and the law is, when one speaks evil against his fellow, he is to give one hundred pieces of silver. He did not pay this sum to the brothers, because they had sold him.

*And five changes of raiment.* One, because he rent his garment (about the cup); and one, because he was his brother of one mother; and one, because the cup was placed with him, and he was made a thief; and two more, "*double,*" because he made him a thief, therefore he paid "*double,*" which a thief has to pay.[4] Thus write the Chizkûni and the B'ḥai.

The Toldoth-Yitzkhac writes: Joseph intimated by the *five*

[1] *Vide* Deut. xxi. 1–9.

[2] עֲגָלָה *Agalah*, means "a wagon," and עֶגְלָה *Eglah*, means "a heifer." The Hebrew original is of course "*wagons,*" and this is only another of those numberless instances of liberties taken with the Massoretic pointing, so as to give an entirely different meaning to the word.

[3] See Exod. xxi. 32. [4] See Exod. xxii. 4.

*changes of raiment* that out of Benjamin would come Mordecai, who would in the presence of the king Ahasuerus wear five royal garments.[1]

23 *And to his father he sent ten asses* laden with victuals and good old wine and all kinds of eatables to be had in the world, and goodly fruit.

And all the brethren went on their return to their father, and Judah went with Benjamin, because he was under oath to bring him back. The B'chai writes: Although Judah brought him, yet on account of the anathema attached to the oath, his bones did not rest in his coffin for forty years, because he ought not to have been surety on the condition of anathema, for Joseph might have prevented Benjamin's return, and therefore he was punished.

24 *Joseph said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.* "See that ye be not afraid on the way. Although ye carry much valuable property, and now being a time of famine when much robbery occurs, yet ye need not fear, because *I* am sending you, and in all parts people are afraid of me."

He also told them: "See that ye do not quarrel by the way, charging one another to have spoken evil of Joseph and to have been the cause of selling him."

He further told them: "See that ye do not study much (the Halachah)[2] by the way, lest you wander."

The Imrae Noam says: Jacob had no need to warn his sons not to get into deep study (of the Halachah) by the way, because they had no corn, and therefore, of course they would not be disposed to study; for as our sages say: If there is no meal, there can be no study of the Law.[3]

Some sages say: Joseph admonished them and said, "When you study on your journey, do not in the midst of your study

[1] See Esther viii. 15. The five garments are thus explained: 1. Blue; 2. white; 3. a crown of gold; 4. a garment of fine linen; and 5. one of purple.

[2] See *Taanith*, fol. 10B.

[3] אם אין קמח אין תורה *Avoth*, chap. iii.

indulge in idle talk, saying, What a beautiful tree this is! What a handsome field that!"[1] And this is what the Gemara means when it says: Do not engage in a matter of Halachah,[2] that is, do not in the midst of study indulge in idle talk, but study earnestly,

Joseph also told them not to walk quickly, because quick walking takes away the light of the eyes![3] For Joseph thought: They will be sure *to run* to tell their father the good news, and hence he admonished them not to walk quickly.

26 *And they told him, Joseph is yet alive, and is governor over all Egypt. And his heart became altered, for he would not believe them.* But when they told him the sign about the Torah (Law) he taught him on parting,[4] he then believed them, and

27 *The spirit of Jacob their father revived.* The spirit of prophecy rested again upon Jacob; for all the time he knew not of Joseph the spirit of prophecy had departed from him, as we see that Joseph was for twenty-two years in Egypt, and though only five days' journey from Jacob, yet Jacob did not know of him. So writes the Tanchûma.

28 *It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive!* It is enough even if he were not a governor. So writes the Chizkûni.

But Rabbi Israel writes: Esau was named Rav (*i.e.* in Hebrew "*enough*"; see xxxii. 9), and he rejoiced when Joseph was lost, for he was an adversary unto Esau; therefore now Jacob exclaimed, Rav (*i.e.* "*enough*"), "thou Esau, rejoice not, *for Joseph my son is yet alive.*"

CHAPTER XLVI.—1 *And Jacob took his journey to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.* From this we learn that one is bound to honour his father more than his grandfather, and therefore Jacob mentioned by

[1] See *Avoth*, chap. iii.

[2] אל תעסקו בדבר הלכה, *Taanith*, fol. 10B.

[3] A wide step deprives a man of a five-hundredth part of the light of his eyes. *Ibid.*

[4] See p. 271, *ante*.

the sacrifices his father Isaac and not his grandfather Abraham.

The Chizkûni writes: Jacob offered sacrifices in Beer-sheba, because his father Isaac had done so there, and therefore he mentioned Isaac and not Abraham.

Jacob offered sacrifices, because he foresaw that his children would be in the captivity of Egypt, and he offered sacrifices and prayed that God would deal kindly with his children in the captivity. And God said unto Jacob:

3 *I am God, the God of thy father*, whom I forbade going into "*the Outside Land*," but thou *fear not to go down into Egypt*. The Chizkûni says: Jacob feared to go into Egypt, because the captivity of Egypt, about which God spake unto Abraham,[1] would then commence. But God said unto him, "If thy children be in bondage, they shall nevertheless have that which I promised them, viz. that in bondage they shall become a great people."

4 *I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again;* that is to say, I will redeem thy children from thence, and thou also shalt not remain there, but be brought up and be buried in the land of Israel. Hence it is said: "*I will also surely bring thee up*," *i.e.* the twelve tribes[2] will also be brought up and be buried in the land of Israel, and afterwards I will bring them into the world to come (heaven).

*I*,[3] it is said "*I*," for it shows that for the sake of the merit which Israel will have when they accept the Decalogue, which begins with "*I*," they will be worthy to go up into the land of Israel, and into the world to come. And (it shows also) as God was with Israel in the captivity of Egypt, so likewise was

[1] Chap. xv. 3.

[2] The twelve sons of Jacob are often called "*the twelve tribes*."

[3] אנכי is the primary and fuller form of אני, and both have the same meaning, *I*. In the Pentateuch the former form occurs more often than in other books of the O.T., and the Decalogue begins with it; also this text, "I will go down," אנכי ארד.

He with them in the captivity of Babylon, and is also in the captivity of Edom, to preserve them at all times; and because God thus preserved them in Egypt, from seventy souls they became six hundred thousand men.

The B'chai writes: A Rabbi once preached, and as the people were inattentive, and many fell asleep, and he was anxious to arouse them, he called out, "There was a woman in Egypt who gave birth to six hundred thousand children;" and they all woke up and eagerly asked who that woman was. "Jochebed," said he, "gave birth to Moses, who, with his good works, outweighed the 600,000 men, that is, all Israel."[1]

*And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.* The Chizkûni writes: God promised Jacob that when he died, Joseph would be alive, and he should put his hand upon Jacob's eyes, as it is the custom to shut a dead man's eyes, it being very disrespectful to leave them open. God also told him that Joseph would carry him with great honour to the land of Israel.

6 *And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Israel,* but the goods which Jacob had gotten in Padan-aram he gave to Esau for his share in the cave where their fathers were buried; for Jacob said, "The money of the outside land is offensive to me;" and he placed before Esau a large heap of gold and silver, and said unto him, "Take this for thy share in the cave." Although Jacob had much regard for his property, as we have seen him return for some small jugs which he had forgotten (on the other side of Jabbok),[2]—and it should be so, for money honestly got is got with difficulty—but the money which he acquired abroad, and on account of which he had forsaken the Holy Land of Israel, *that money* he would not have, and he gave it away to Esau.

10 *And Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman.* The text counts the children of Jacob, and records that a son of the children of Simeon, whose name was *Shaul*, was the son of *the*

[1] משה שקול כנגד כל ישראל. Moses was equivalent to all Israel. *Tal. Misc.*, p. 322.

[2] *Vide* Chap. xxxii. 22–24.

Canaanitish woman. This is the son of Dinah, who conceived by Shechem, who was a Canaanite. For Dinah would not leave Shechem's house, lest no one would marry her, till Simeon swore that he would marry her; and he kept his oath, and had by her a son *Shaul.*

Although Dinah was his sister, yet he married her; for with each brother was born a female twin, which he (subsequently) married. The text does not say distinctly that they married their twin sisters, but it is said (ver. 26), "all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, *which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives,*" and from this it is understood that the women also came out of his loins, and each son took his twin sister for a wife.

All the souls (of Jacob's family) were seventy, and with Jacob they were seventy-one. Thus there were in Egypt seventy elders, and Moses was over them. Also there are seventy angels round the throne of Glory, and God is over them all.

12 *And the sons of Judah, Er and Onan.* The Chizkûni writes: The reason for counting Er and Onan, who died before coming to Egypt, was because Judah had been the cause of all the children of Jacob coming into captivity; for had he prevented the brethren selling Joseph, they would not have had to come into Egypt, and as he had given cause for mourning, God said, "Even when thy father will be in joy, thy children who died shall be mentioned, in order that thou also shalt mourn."[1]

12 *The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife.* Of none is it said "Jacob's wife" but of Rachel, because he loved her more than all other wives.

26 *And all the souls were threescore and six.* The term "souls" (in the original) is in the singular,[2] but of Esau, whose family were but six, the text uses the same term in the *plural.*[3]

[1] For God pays measure for measure.

[2] נֶפֶשׁ Nephesh, *i.e.* soul or person, *sing.*

[3] Chap. xxvi. 6, נְפָשׁוֹת Nephashoth, *i.e.* souls or persons, *plural.*

The reason is this: Esau, and *each* of his family, worshipped a separate idol, therefore the *plural* was used; but Jacob and his children served *one God*, as if all were one person, hence the singular is used.

28 *And Jacob sent Judah before him*, to show the way to Goshen, to avoid going through the (chief) city, *Egypt*.[1] Thus writes the Chizkûni; but Rashi says: He sent him before to find a proper place where to study the Torah.

29 *And Joseph made ready his chariot.* Joseph himself personally got ready his chariot to go and meet his father. Rabbi Yehudah says: Two individuals have had such great honour as no other man. One is Jacob; for when Joseph went to meet him all the Egyptian princes went also with great pomp: and the other was Jethro; when Moses our Rabbi went to meet him all Israel went also to meet him, and he too had great honour.

*And Joseph fell on his neck and wept.* The Ramban says: It cannot be that Joseph was so ill-mannered as to fall on his father's neck; he ought to have stooped down before him with reverence. But the explanation is, that Jacob fell on the neck of Joseph, *and wept on his neck again*, as he wept when he lost him. He despaired of ever seeing him, and now he found him a ruler, therefore he wept for joy, as the manner of old people is to weep in their sorrows and in their joys.

30 *And Israel said unto Joseph, Now I shall die but once.* I thought I should die twice, once in this world and once in the world to come; that God would punish me for having sent thee away, and caused thy death and the departure of the Shechinah as well; but now, because thou livest, I shall die but once in this world. Thus writes Rashi.

But the Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Jacob said, "Ever since they brought me the shirt pierced, I was as one that is dead;

[1] מצרים Mitzra-yim, *i.e.* Egypt, being in the dual form, probably suggested the idea to the commentator that the proper name Mitzra-yim was common to both the land and to the chief city of the land.

but now seeing thee alive, I also live, and shall not die till my time comes."

31–34 *And Joseph said unto his brethren, I will go up and tell Pharaoh* that my father and my brethren have come, and when he asks you what tradespeople ye are, say that ye tend sheep, like your fathers, and say that ye have so many sheep that ye have no time to do anything else.

The Chizkûni says: Joseph had ordered them to say that they tended sheep, in order not to lower him in the estimation of Pharaoh, and as shepherds Pharaoh could make nothing of them.

Rashi says: He told them to say that they tended sheep, because the Egyptians worship sheep, and hate shepherds, because they beat the sheep when they wander from the track. Shepherds hold that sheep are *nothing* (*Divine*), and Pharaoh would not engage them in his service.

CHAPTER XLVII.—2 *And Joseph took five of his brethren* who were not so strong and so handsome as the rest, *and placed them before Pharaoh.* He did not take the strongest, that Pharaoh might not make them commanders over his army.

Joseph presented Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Benjamin, and Issachar, because they were the weakest; and when Pharaoh asked them what their occupations were, they said, "We tend sheep, and we came here because there is no pasture in the land of Canaan, and we desire to settle in the land of Goshen." Pharaoh told Joseph, "Let thy brethren and their households settle in Goshen, and settle thy father wherever thou art pleased. If thou knowest strong men among them, make them chief shepherds over my flocks; for my flocks are fed in the wilderness, where there are wild beasts, and those that keep them need to be strong."

7 *And Joseph brought Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh.* Jacob saluted Pharaoh, and Pharaoh asked him, "*How old art thou?*" and Jacob replied, "I am not old, but

trouble makes me look old, and my parents were older than I am; only I have been a pilgrim all my life, wandering about from one city to another, and as yet I have had no good fortune.

The Chizkûni writes: God said unto Jacob, "I have delivered thee from Esau, and from Laban, and from Shechem, and I have given thee back Dinah and Joseph, and yet thou sayest that *few and evil* have been thy years? Therefore will I shorten thy life, as compared to the life of thy fathers, by thirty-three years, for the thirty-three words[1] which thou didst speak too many. From this we learn that a man ought to praise God even when things do not go so well with him; he should not speak against God, for whatever God does He does for the best.

The Imrae Noam writes: Because Jacob said that he would remain in Egypt only till the famine was over, and would afterwards return to the land of Israel, therefore Pharaoh asked him, "*How old art thou?* Dost thou expect yet to live so long and to return, after the famine, to the land of Israel?"

The Midrash writes: The same Pharaoh was (on a visit) to Abimelech when Abraham was there. The entrance door to Abimelech's house was low, and an idol was placed over it, so that when one entered he had to stoop and bow down before the idol. But when Abraham had to enter, the door lifted itself up to a proper height, and he had no need to bow down. At Pharaoh's also was such a door, with such an idol over it, and when Jacob had to enter, the door lifted itself up, hence

[1] Evidently instead of *words* it should be *letters*, for all the words Jacob spake to Pharaoh were twenty-one, and these were not all "too many." The thirty-three letters constitute the following Hebrew words: מעט ורעים היו ימי שני חיי ולא השיגו את ימי, *i.e.* "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of." These, then, are the thirty-three letters which Jacob had spoken too many, and for which he forfeited thirty-three years of his holy life. Surely "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. xviii. 21).

the question of Pharaoh, "*How old art thou?*" for he thought him to be Abraham, because the door lifted itself up as he entered.

10 *And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.* Because in Egypt there is no rain to water the fields; he blessed him that the Nile should rise towards him[1] and water the fields.

12 *And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren* and all their household with bread sufficient even for the little children, who crumble and waste much bread.

14–18 *And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought, and brought the money into Pharaoh's treasury. And when the money failed, they came to Joseph and said, Give us bread, for why should we die in thy presence, for the money faileth.* Joseph said, "Give up your cattle," and for the cattle he gave them bread for a whole year, at the end of which he took their fields in exchange for corn.

The Ramban writes: The Egyptians said, "The money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan." What did it concern them that the money failed in the land of Canaan? But (the reply is): They said to Joseph, "The money has now failed in every land, and no one will now buy the corn; give us the corn, for why should we die for nothing?"

19 *Give us seed,* to sow our fields. Although Joseph said, "And yet there are five years of famine, in the which there can be no ploughing nor sowing," but now having given them corn, people may still say that Joseph was not a genuine prophet. The explanation is: When Jacob came to Egypt the Nile rose to meet him, and watered all the fields, so that the officers of Pharaoh said the blessing came for the sake of Jacob.[2]

The Ramban says: When Jacob died, the five years of

[1] Rashi says: When Pharaoh came to the Nile, it always rose to meet him, and thus the land was watered.

[2] This explanation explains nothing, and the whole paragraph is obscure.

famine commenced, to fulfil the seven years foretold by Joseph; but when Jacob the righteous was yet in the world, the blessing was with him in it.[1]

*Buy us and our land for bread.* They said; "Buy us for servants." The Ramban says: It is stated further on that he bought the land only, because the Egyptians desired that Joseph should buy them for servants to serve Pharaoh, and to buy the land for himself. But Joseph said, "I will not buy the land otherwise, except ye be sold with it to till it." Hence it is stated that he bought the land as real property, and men as serfs attached to the land. Joseph said, "I ought to give you only a fifth part of the produce to live upon, and four parts ye should give to Pharaoh, because both you and the land are his; but I will deal mercifully with you, and take only a fifth for Pharaoh, and four parts ye shall take, as if ye were landed proprietors, on condition that ye serve Pharaoh and till the land *for ever*."

Joseph fearing if every one remained on his land, the compact might in process of time be forgotten, and the people would refuse paying a fifth unto Pharaoh, therefore

21 *He removed them* from one city to another, in order that no one should remain on his land.

22 *For the priests had a portion.* Bread was given to the priests from the king's table.

END OF SECTION XI.

28 *And Jacob lived.* Solomon says in Proverbs, "In the way of almsgiving is life."[2] He who gives alms lives long. Alms is above all the constellations: when a constellation

[1] This seems to suggest that the blessing of plenty did not cease till Jacob died, otherwise this paragraph is as obscure as the one preceding. *Vide* chap. l. 21.

[2] Prov. xii. 28. In the A.V. it is, "In the way of righteousness is life." The Hebrew word צְדָקָה means righteousness, but the Rabbinical Jews give it also the meaning of alms, almsgiving, charity. A chapter on Alms will be found in *Treasures of the Talmud.*

indicates that a certain man will not live long, through alms-giving he may have his life prolonged. Hence our sages have said: Great is charity, she reaches to the throne of glory; that is to say, she is higher than all the constellations. Thus we find in this section that Jacob had no longer to live, but because he had maintained Joseph seventeen years—for Joseph was of that age when he was parted from his father—he was worthy to live seventeen years longer, to be maintained by Joseph, for God rewards measure for measure.

*So the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.* There is no blank space between this section and the one preceding it (as is usual), but it is stopped up.[1] This is because in this section is recorded the death of Jacob. When he died, the eyes and hearts of Israel were closed up on account of the afflictions of the captivity.

Another explanation is: Because Jacob intended to reveal the end of the captivity, the Shechinah departed from him, that he should not tell when the advent of the Messiah would be, and therefore this section was closed up.

The Midrash says: Jacob saw that in the names of his children there were neither the letter *Cheth* nor the letter *Teth*, which two letters make the word *khet* (sin). He wanted to reveal the end, but seeing that the letters *Koph* and *Tzaddi* are also not (to be found in the names of his children), and these two letters make the word *kets* (*end*), he therefore did not reveal the end, and hence this section is closed up.

29 *And the time drew nigh that Israel must die.* Jacob, feeling that his physical powers were leaving him, and that he must soon die, sent for his son Joseph, to adjure him that he should carry him to the land of Canaan and bury him there.

[1] The Pentateuch is divided into fifty-two sections, and the divisions of these sections are invariably indicated by a blank space marked in the centre by three solitary letters, either three ב ב ב, technically called Pethuchoth = opened up, or three ס ס ס, called Sethumoth = closed up. The open space thus marked is in the present case omitted.

The B'chai writes: The text says, "and *Jacob* lived," and afterwards it says, "*Israel* must die." Because Jacob means *footstep*, indicative of things terrestrial, but Israel means something of a superior nature, and points to things celestial, hence when he came to Egypt to nourish his *body*, it is said, "and *Jacob* lived"; but when his soul was about to separate from the body and begin to live the real life in another world, he is called *Israel*.

*And he called his son Joseph.* Although Reuben was the firstborn and Judah the (family) governor, he called his son Joseph, because he was ruler in Egypt, and had the power to convey his remains to Canaan; and said—

*Deal kindly and truly with me.* The kindness done towards the dead is true and disinterested kindness, for one cannot expect to receive anything in return.

*Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt.* 1. Because the dust of Egypt will be smitten with the plague of lice,[1] and the lice would creep over my body. 2. Because when the dead in the outside land will rise at the advent of the Messiah, they will have to roll under mountains and through caves, to reach the land of Israel, which will be very painful to them[2]; and 3. That the Egyptians might make an idol of me.

31 *And he sware unto him.* The Ramban writes: Jacob feared that Pharaoh would wish to have him buried in Egypt

[1] Exod. viii. 17.

[2] For the same reason Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel that they would not leave his bones outside the land of Israel. *Kethuvoth*, fol. 111A. To this very day among the Polish Jews the dead are provided with *little wooden forks*, for their long subterranean journey, with which at the sound of the (שופר גדול) great trumpet, *they are to dig and burrow their way from where they happen to be buried till they arrive in the land of Israel.* To avoid this underground journey, there are many who on the approach of old age emigrate to the Holy Land, that they may die there, and there rest until the morning of the resurrection, which will take place at the advent of the Messiah, when the great trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise.

in order to secure his merits as a protection or patron for his people, therefore Jacob took an oath of Joseph, which oath Pharaoh would not break.[1]

The Eben Shoab writes thus: During seventeen years of Jacob's sojourn in Egypt, no woman miscarried, and no man had the tooth-ache. * * *

The Eben Shoab writes, that the word vay'khi[2] (*i.e.* and he lived, namely Jacob) amounts (numerical value) to four and thirty; that is to say, the real life of Jacob was thirty-four years; seventeen years from the day Joseph was born to the day he was lost, and the seventeen years, which he was with him in Egypt, but the rest of his years were not real life.

The B'chai writes: Jacob was afraid to lie in Egypt lest they should make him into a god, and God punishes the gods[3] as well as those that worship them.

Jacob therefore also ordered that he should be buried in the land of Israel, because the earth of the land of Israel atones for sin, as it is written: "The people that dwell *therein* shall be forgiven."[4] There also is the gate of heaven through which the prayers (of the righteous) pass, and through which his soul would soon enter.

*I will lie with my fathers.* Rabbi Yitzkhac learns from this, that on the day a man dies he knows whither he will go; hence Jacob said first: "*I will lie with my fathers*," and afterwards he said: "*Thou shalt carry me* to the land of Israel, for," said he, "my soul will soon come to my fathers."

Also when a man dies at sea, or in the desert, he must finally come to his fathers. Jacob said: "*Bury me in their burying place* where my fathers were buried." From this we

[1] *Vide* chap. l. 6.

[2] ויחי = 34. *See* List of Numerals, p. xii.

[3] Exod. xii. 12.

[4] Isa. xxxiii. 24. See also Deut. xxxii. 43, as explained in *Treasures of the Talmud*, pp. 283, 284.

learn that the righteous should be buried by the side of the righteous, and the wicked by the side of the wicked.[1]

*I will do as thou hast said.* That is to say, "In accordance with the oath thou hast imposed on me, I will do, and will carry thee to the land of Canaan. I likewise will take an oath of the tribes, that they shall (eventually) bury me in the land of Israel."

*And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head,* for the Shechinah rests at the head of the sick man's bed.[2]

[1] Not even the notoriously wicked by the side of those that were less wicked. Two enemies are also not to be buried together because שאף במותם אין להם מנוחה יחד, *i.e.* for even in death they have no rest together (they quarrel). *Yorah Deah*, sec. 362.

[2] For it is written (Ps. xli. 3), "God will support him on the bed of illness." *Shabbath*, fol, 12B.

It appears, however, from another part of the Talmud, that "Israel bowed himself" to Joseph, and not to the Shechinah, thus illustrating the Talmudic proverb still current amongst the Jews: "When a fox is in the ascendant, bow down to him." *Meggillah*, fol. 16B.

Jacob, in the act of obeisance to Joseph, must naturally have been "*leaning upon the top of his staff*" (Heb. xi. 21), and not "*upon the bed's head.*" The letters of the Hebrew word, which means either "*staff*" or "*bed,*" are precisely the same, viz. מ ט ה, *Mem, Teth, He,* and the New Testament reads the word of these three letters, מַטֶּה *Matteh,* which means "*staff,*" but the Jewish Massorah punctuates the same word differently and reads it מִטָּה *Mittah, which* means "*bed.*"

The Revisers, in their new Version of the Old Testament, have adopted the reading of the Jewish Massorah, and, no doubt, this will please the Jews. But still more will it please the Jews when they find that the proper name of *Jehovah,* out of superstition read by them *Adonai,* has been rendered in the Revised Version of the Old Testament, "LORD." This is a very grave mistake which cannot be sufficiently regretted,—1st, because, whatever the real meaning may be, *Jehovah* does not mean "*Lord*"; and 2ndly, because, *Jehovah* being a proper name of the Divine Being, it ought never to be translated at all. Adam and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Aaron and Samuel, David and Solomon, and many others, are all proper names with their respective meanings, yet when the personages bearing these names are spoken of in Scripture, their names are left untranslated. What warrant then is there to translate into the vulgar tongue the sacred name of *Jehovah?* Above all, what warrant is there to

Another explanation is: He bowed himself (in grateful acknowledgment) that, from the beginning unto the end, his bed was perfect, that from it came no wicked child, for all his children were righteous; even Joseph, though he was among idolaters, still was righteous.

Here then the whole dream of Joseph was fulfilled; for the sun, indicative of the father, had also bowed down to him.[1]

CHAPTER XLVIII.—1 *And it came to pass after these words, it was told unto Joseph, Behold thy father is sick.* The Chizkûni writes: From the creation of the world down to the time of Jacob, no man had ever been sick;[2] when one finished his course here below, he sneezed, and fell down and died, even in the street or on the road. But Jacob prayed that he might be sick before his death, in order that he should be able to communicate to his children his last will and testament. God heard his prayer, and he became sick. Hence when one sneezes we must say "*Assutha!*" which means, *To your good health!*[3]

Jacob sent Ephraim, who was constantly with him, to tell Joseph that his father was ill. The Eben Shoab writes: Joseph kept himself continually aloof from his father in order to avoid entering into a conversation as to how he came into Egypt, for he never would tell him that; but he always said that

give *a false rendering* of Jehovah It is written that *Jehovah* is our God, and *by Him only* shall we make mention of His name (without changing *Jehovah* into *Adonai*), Isa. xxvi. 13. And again: "O give thanks unto *Jehovah*, קראו בשמו, call ye (Him) by *His* name," and not by the name substituted by Jewish superstition. See Ps. cv. 1.

[1] Evidently the comment means to say, For the father, as indicated by the sun, had also bowed down to him. But where is the mother, as indicated by the moon? For an answer to this we must wait (עד שיבא אליהו) *till Elijah comes.*

[2] The Talmud adds to this, that down to the time of Elisha, recovery from sickness was unknown. *Bava Metzia*, fol. 87A.

[3] This is observed among the Jews of all classes to this day, especially among mothers, when their infants sneeze.

he lost himself on the road and wandered about. Although this was a lie, for the sake of peace a lie may be told.[1]

2 *And Israel strengthened himself and sat upon the bed*; for although Joseph was his son, yet he was a ruler, therefore he did him honour, even as Moses our Master did honour unto Pharaoh.

The Chizkûni writes: Jacob sat up to show that he was in his right mind as a man in good health; for a sick person who gives a gift may on recovery repent, and plead that he was not in a proper state of mind when he made the gift. Hence Jacob sat up to show that he was well enough to bless Joseph's children, without being able to recall the blessing.

And Jacob said: "God told me that besides Benjamin I was to have two tribes more, and as I have no more children but Benjamin, I therefore know that one tribe must be divided who will receive two shares in the land of Israel. This gift I give unto thee Joseph. Ephraim and Manasseh shall receive two shares in the land of Israel, as *Reuben and Simeon.* This he did in honour of Rachel; because Joseph was her firstborn, therefore he gave him two shares.

7 *And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me.* "I know that thou art not pleased with me for troubling thee to carry me to the Land of Canaan, as thy mother Rachel died on the road, and I did not bury her in the cave of the fathers, nor carry her to the city of Bethlehem near the spot where she died. But know thou, that God ordered it so; for when Israel will be carried into captivity by Nebuzaradan,[2] and pass that way, Rachel will arise from her grave, and pray unto God, and God will hear her prayer."[3]

The Chizkûni writes: Jacob did not bury Rachel in the

[1] פון שלום וועגין מעג מען איין ליגין זאגין. This Jewish dogma is quite proverbial just as here quoted from the text. This ancient Rabbinical doctrine is here taught in modern language, *Jewish jargon*, that also women and children may read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it.

[2] 2 Kings xxv. 11.

[3] See Jer. xxxi. 15–17.

cave, because at that time Esau claimed a right to the cave, and hence Jacob's right to it was not settled yet. But when he buried Leah, the case was settled; Esau left the cave to Jacob alone.

Another explanation is: The spot of Rachel's burial is in her own children's portion of land, and it is an honour to her to lie there, whereas the cave is situated in the land of Judah, in the portion of Leah's children, and it would not have been an honour to Rachel had she been buried there.

Another explanation is: Because Rachel died when giving birth to Benjamin, and consequently she was in such a state as to make it necessary to bury her on the spot where she died in order to preserve her shroud unsoiled.

The Chizkûni and the Toldoth Yitzkhac question Rashi's statement as to Rachel's not being buried in the land of Israel, for we find that she *was* buried in the land of Canaan. The answer is: She was not buried in a town but in a field.

The Ramban writes: Jacob did not bury Rachel in the cave, because he felt ashamed that two sisters should lie with him in the same cave. He buried Leah there, because he married her first, *lawfully*.

8 *And Israel beheld Joseph's sons.* The Chizkûni asks: As Jacob could not see, how is it that he beheld Joseph's sons? The reply is: He recognised Joseph by the voice, and by force of reason he understood that they were Joseph's sons.

Jacob wishing to bless the children, the Shechinah departed from him, because out of Ephraim were to come forth Jeroboam and Ahab, two wicked kings; and of Manasseh were to come forth Jehu with his wicked children.

*And he said,* "*Who are these* that are not worthy to be blessed?"

9 *And Joseph said,* "*They are my sons,* which I have begotten

[1] His marrying Rachel was unlawful, and deprived him of the privilege of blessing the cup of salvation at the Messianic banquet. *Psachim*, fol. 119B. Vide *Gen. acc. to Talmud*, 337, v. 8.

in proper wedlock," and he showed him the marriage contract. He prayed; and the Shechinah again resting on Jacob, he said, "Bring them unto me, and I will bless them."

10 *Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: The text mentions that Jacob could not see, because it is usual, when one wishes to bless another, to fix his eyes upon him, in order that the blessing should rest upon him; but as Jacob could not see, he asked that they should be brought near, so that he could lay his hands upon them, and thus cause the blessing to rest on them. In the present age, when so few men have good eyes, we are obliged to bless by the laying on of hands.[1]

11–14 *And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face, and God hath showed me also thy seed. And he kissed them. And Joseph brought them out from between Jacob's knees,* in order to place them properly; Manasseh on the right hand of Jacob, because he was the firstborn, and Ephraim on the left, to bless them.

*Guiding his hands wittingly.* Jacob understood that Joseph would place Manasseh on his right hand and Ephraim on his left, but as he prophetically foresaw that out of Ephraim would come forth better children than from Manasseh, he wittingly crossed his hands, and laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim. Not wishing to put Manasseh to shame by ordering him to change place with Ephraim, he left them as Joseph had placed them, *guiding his hands wittingly,* placing the right hand on Ephraim. *Because Manasseh was the firstborn,* Jacob would not disgrace him by making him change his place towards his left hand.

The Chizkûni and the B'chai write: Although *Manasseh was the firstborn,* and Jacob ought to have blessed him with the right

[1] When a holy Rabbi is to bless a female, he generally puts his handkerchief on her head before laying on of his hands, and thus avoids coming in contact with a woman, whom he is bound to look upon כחמת מלא צואה, as a leather bottle full of filth, etc. *Shabbath,* fol. 152A.

hand, yet he did not do so, because he prophetically foresaw that the children of Ephraim would be better than the children of Manasseh; hence he blessed Ephraim with the right hand.

16 *Let them grow (as fish)*[1] *into a multitude in the midst of the earth.* Jacob blessed them to increase abundantly, like the fish in water, that they should not be susceptible to the effects of an evil eye, as the fish are sheltered from its effects.

17 *When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.*

19 *His father said, "I know it, my son, I know it,* that Manasseh is the firstborn; *he also shall become a great people; but the younger brother shall be greater than he;* for out of Manasseh shall come Gideon, through whom God will work a miracle unto Israel;[2] but out of Ephraim shall come Joshua, who will cause Israel to inherit the land, and will teach them the Torah (Law); and will fight with the idolaters, and will cause the sun to stand still in Gibeon, so that the day will be longer for his sake, that he may be able to destroy the idolaters; and will cause the moon to stand still in the valley of Ajalon,[3] in the midst of battle, that it shall not be night."

The Ramban writes: Joseph was troubled that Jacob laid his right hand on Ephraim, because he thought that he was not prophetically inspired, but laid his right hand on the younger by mistake, and hence he feared that the blessings would have no effect, because they were bestowed in mistake. But Jacob told him, "I am not mistaken; *I know it, my son, I know it,* that this is the elder."

The Toldoth Yitzkhac writes: Joseph waited till after the first blessing before he attempted to change his father's hands, because he thought that Jacob intended to honour both; the

[1] וידגו from the verb דגה, to increase in number, as fish. In English there is no verb equivalent to this Hebrew verb.

[2] See Judg. vi. 37–40, and vii. 22, etc. [3] Josh. x. 12, 13.

one he would bless with the right hand, and the other with a greater blessing; but observing that he blessed both alike, he felt concerned that he had laid his right hand on Ephraim. But Jacob said: "*I know it, my son, I know it.* I know two things; I know why I lay my right hand on the head of Ephraim, and I know that I have not blessed Manasseh more than Ephraim. I will bless Ephraim yet more. When Israel will bless their children, they shall say,

20 *God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh.* Ephraim shall be said before Manasseh." Thus writes the Toldoth Yitzkhac.

The B'chai writes: The meaning of "And he set Ephraim before Manasseh," is, he placed him as a servant before a master, to wait upon him. He said, "Thou art the younger and Manasseh is the elder, therefore thou art to do him honour."

When Jacob had done blessing Manasseh and Ephraim, he also blessed Joseph separately, and communicated to him about the captivity and the redemption from it, and that God would redeem Israel.

22 *One portion above thy brother.* Jacob said unto Joseph, I have given thee the birthright. Thou shalt have *a portion more above thy brother*, that Ephraim and Manasseh shall take in the land two portions, just as Reuben and Simeon, when the land is taken from the Amorites, And because I trouble thee to carry me into the land of Canaan, I will give thee for that the city of Shechem, and there shalt thou be buried.

CHAPTER XLIX.—1 *And Jacob called his sons*, and wanted to tell them what would come to pass *in the last days.* He wanted to tell them when the Messiah would come; but the Shechinah departed from him, and he began speaking other words, and said:

3 *Reuben, thou art my firstborn*, thou mightest have been worthy to have over and above thy brethren the birthright, the dignity of the priesthood, and the power of roya'ty. The Toldoth Yitzkhac says: Because Reuben was the first seed,

he ought to have had the priesthood, to receive the *first* of the corn, the *first* of the dough, and the *first* of the sacrifices. Then, because at that time (just before Reuben was born), Jacob was very powerful—for he took off the stone from the mouth of the well, which many people unitedly could not do—and he married Leah, and immediately he had by her Reuben, the very *first of his strength;* therefore, Reuben ought to have had the kingship, for a king ought to be strong, and have a strong heart to carry on war. "This thou oughtest to have had over and above thy brothers; but why shouldest thou not have it? Because

4 *Unstable as water* hast thou been with thy wrath to run in haste, therefore thou art not worthy to be a king.

And thou shalt not have the birthright either, because thou hast interrupted the nuptial bed of thy father and Bilhah, for thou hast said that thou art the firstborn, and the less children there will be, the more property will come to thee, therefore thou shalt not have the birthright.

And also the priesthood thou shalt not have, because thou hast profaned and made unholy the bed of thy father, and thou shalt be unholy." The Chizkûni says: From the time that Reuben had committed that sin with Bilhah,[1] Jacob never came to her again.

[1] And yet the Talmud says plainly: כל האומר ראובן חטא אינו אלא טועה, *i.e.* Whoever says that Reuben has sinned, is decidedly in error. *Shabbath*, fol. 55B. Had Reuben been a son of Esau (a Gentile), and not a son of Jacob, the Rabbis would have shown him no such favour. (See footnote on p. 166, *ante.*) A son of Esau, however, on reading this passage from the Talmud, might pertinently ask: Does the Talmud really mean what it says respecting the crime of Reuben, or does it say what it does not mean? Anyhow, it implies either that *sin is not sinful*, or that *falsehood and truth are synonymous.* It is quite true that the Talmud (*Bava Metzia*, fol. 59A) endorses the "Yea, yea, and Nay, nay," enforced in the Gospel (Matt. v. 37); but in numerous instances, perversion of truth is distinctly taught by precept and example. (See p. 124 note, *ante.*) Hence, even from a moral point of view, the superiority of the Gospel over the Talmud is plain and manifest.

*He went up to my couch.* This was addressed by Jacob to the rest of his children. "You see, *he went up to my couch*, on which I used to lie." The B'chai observes on, *Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed*, "thou hast profaned *two* beds; one was the resting place of the Shecinah on the bed, and my own resting place."

The Midrash says: Jacob said to Reuben, "Thou shalt not be cured of the disgrace till Moses our Master counts thee *first* among those that shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce the curse: *Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife.*[1] Then will all Israel know that because thou wert *first* placed to curse others for that sin, thy sin had been forgiven thee."

5 *Simeon and Levi are brethren* of one mind, one in counsel respecting Shechem and Joseph. "Ye need not have slain the inhabitants of Shechem, because the people had been circumcised, and probably would have become genuine Jews."

Another explanation is: *Simeon and Levi are brothers*, and as such they would have given their lives for their sister Dinah; "but," said he to them, "in the case of Joseph ye were not like brothers should be, for ye cast him into the pit, and ye sold him." Hence Joseph in Egypt cast Simeon into prison to atone for his sin of selling him.

*Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation.* Ye have robbed Esau of his sword; your business is not to go about with the sword like Esau, for it was his blessing to commit murders with the sword.[2]

*Let my soul not come into their secret.* In the secret plot of Zimri let me have no part, when the tribe of Simeon will be gathered together and bring a Midianitish woman before Moses, and ask him: "Is it, or is it not, lawful to have her? If thou say, She is *unlawful*, who then permitted *thee* to take the daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian?" Jacob said:

[1] Deut. xxvii. 13, 20.

[2] דאם איז זיי ברכה ניוועז ער זאל מיט דער שוערד רציחות טאן. Chap. xxv. 29, and footnote, *ante.*

"In this act let my name not be mentioned, as it is said: '*Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of the chief house of the Simeonites.*'"[1] And there Jacob's name is not mentioned. "And also in the contention of Korah, a descendant of Levi, let my name also not be mentioned," as it is written: "*Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi,*"[2] and here also it is not added, "the son of *Jacob.*"

7 *Cursed be their anger*, God grant that they should have no mouth to curse, in order not to be able to effect anything in their anger! Thus writes the Chizkûni.

But Rashi writes: Although they deserved to be cursed, yet Jacob did not curse them, but their anger.

*I will divide them in Jacob*, that of the tribe of Simeon shall be the supply of teachers of children and of scribes, who (being always poor)[3] will be scattered. To Levi he made the position of being scattered more honourable; they were to scatter themselves on the threshing-floors to collect oblations and tithes.

When Judah observed that the father rebuked the brethren

[1] Num. xxv. 14.

[2] *Ibid.* xvi. 1.

[3] In olden times the men of the Great Synagogue observed twenty-four fasts, that the scribes of books, Phylacteries, etc., might not become rich, lest in becoming rich they might be tempted not to write any more. *Psachim*, fol. 50B. In our own days, schoolmasters and scribes are always poor, and the former are proverbially considered foolish, generally knowing nothing beyond the Bible and the Talmud to a very limited extent. A simpleton, or a good-for-nothing, or idle fellow, is usually stigmatised as a "Schwanz Melamed," *i.e.* literally "a tail schoolmaster," or a fool.

If a well educated Jew comes to poverty and is obliged to turn schoolmaster, few Jews would trust him with the education of their children, for fear lest they should hear things of their Melamed which they had better not know. The Talmud says in *Berachoth*, fol. 28B, ומנעו בניכם מן ההגיון, *i.e.* Restrain your children from meditating—*in Scripture*, says Rashi in *loco*. Do not, says Rashi, habituate them in Scripture more than enough, because it draws away into heresy. Enlightened schoolmasters are apt to teach the Scripture more than the Talmud, and of course that is more than enough according to orthodox Judaism.

with hard words, he began to retreat, but the father recalled him with kindly words and said:

8 *Judah, thy brethren shall praise thee; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies*, for they shall flee from thee in war, and turn their back to thee; *thy father's children shall bow down before thee.* He said: "*Thy father's children*," because he had many wives, and had children by each, and he intended that all his children, though not of one mother, should bow down to him.

9 *Judah is a lion's whelp.* Jacob prophesied that out of Judah should come David. He will at first be as a young lion, and will in the time of Saul lead Israel to fight in battle; and then, on Saul's death, he will be an old lion, he will be a king himself.

*From the prey of my son thou art gone up.*[1] "I suspected thee that thou didst make a prey of my son and kill him, but it was not so; thou hast delivered him from death, and hast said, '*What profit is it if we slay our brother?*'[2] And at the affair of Tamar thou didst confess that she was with child *by thee*, and thus saved her from death, therefore thou wilt have the merit that out of thee shall come king Solomon, in whose days Israel will have rest." Thus Rashi and the Chizkûni write.

*From the prey of my son thou art gone up*, means: In rapine, my son, thou excellest! and thou art expert to make prey of thine enemies and to kill them.

The question on Rashi is asked: Why did Jacob praise Judah for having said, "*What profit is it if we slay our brother?*" since the Gemara says, He who praises Judah for this saying is in error;[3] for he said, "What profit is it if we

[1] A.V., From the prey, my son, thou art, etc.

[2] Chap. xxxvii. 26.

[3] כל המברך את יהודה ה"ז מנאץ, *i.e.* He who praises Judah (for it) is a *contemner*. *Sanhedrim*, fol. 6B. The commentator misquotes the Gemara by changing the term מנאץ into מועה.

slay our brother?" which is as much as to say, had there been a profit it would have been right to slay him. Can this be conceivable? Hence it is thus explained: Judah said, "What profit is it if we slay a man even if he were not our brother? and especially he being our brother, even if we were to profit much money, we still ought not to slay a brother. And that which Reuben counselled you, not to shed blood with your own hands, but to cast him into a deep pit, that was also not right, for he is our brother. Cain slew his brother Abel, and the earth would not receive his blood which continually cried from the ground;"[1] and hence Judah said, "What profit is it if we slay our brother, and *conceal his blood?* if the deep pit does in a manner conceal his blood, the blood will still cry from the ground."

The Talmud says: For the words, "*what profit*," we ought to praise him, but for the rest of the words (of that text) Jacob praised him and said, "*From the prey of my son thou excellest*, because he is my son, and thou art my son, ye are brothers, and as thou wouldst not make him a prey, thou art greatly praised for it."

10 *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah.* The kingdom of the tribe of Judah shall not depart, nor the princes in the land of Israel which are of the tribe of Judah, *until Shiloh come;* and this shall be *till* the King Messiah come whose Kingdom it is; and all shall bring gifts and sacrifices unto Him.

The B'chai writes: "*Until Shiloh come*," means, that the kingdom of Judah shall last till Moses comes to be king, as it is written in the text, "And he was king in Jeshurun,"[2] *i.e.* And Moses will be king over Israel. Shiloh having the same numerical value as Moses,[3] it refers to Moses.

The B'chai gives yet another explanation: The sceptre (of

[1] Chap. iv. 10. [2] Deut. xxxiii. 5.

[3] In the Ethics of the Fathers we are told: וגימטריאות פרפראות לחכמה, *i.e.* And *Gematrias are ornaments of wisdom;* of course, not excepting יהודי בגימטריא כוזב, the numerical value of each being 35.

royalty) shall not be bestowed on Judah *until* the Tabernacle of Shiloh shall be destroyed, and then will Samuel anoint David, a descendant of Judah, as king.

And yet another explanation gives the B'chai: *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah for ever*, reckoning from the time of the Messiah's advent, but before that event it might depart for a time, for *Ad*[1] (the word rendered *until*) means *for ever.*

The B'chai also says: "*Until Shiloh come*," refers to Moses, and it intimates, as he had led Israel out of Egypt, so likewise will he and Elijah lead them out of the last and final captivity —for Shiloh is numerically equivalent to Moses—as the Midrash Rabthi says: God will say unto Moses, "As thou hast sacrificed thyself for Israel in Egypt, thou shalt also, when Elijah leads Israel from their final captivity, come with him," for it is written: "*The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm.*"[2] *Whirlwind* means Moses, who was cast into the water among the bulrushes;[3] and *storm* means Elijah, who entered heaven alive in a storm.

The B'chai remarks on: "*From the prey, my son, thou art gone up*:" because Judah delivered Joseph from the pit that he should not die there, therefore God delivered Daniel, a descendant of Judah, from the lion's den; and because Judah confessed that Tamar was with child by him, and thus he rescued her with the twin-children from the fire in which she was about to be burned, therefore God delivered Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were descendants of Judah, from the furnace, out of which they came alive. Also all the temples were and will be built by Judah. The first temple

[1] עַד, For ever, everlasting, eternity;—till, until, unto, to, towards.

[2] Nahum i. 3.

[3] סוּפָה, *Suphah*, whirlwind, and סוּף, *Suph*, bulrush; the similarity of the letters and almost of the sound of the two Hebrew words is here made to mean what it does *not* mean. Cases like this are innumerable. סַעַר, *Saarah*, means storm, tempest, and is rendered in the A.V., 2 Kings ii. 1, whirlwind, and in Nahum, storm.

was built by Solomon, a descendant of Judah, and the second temple was built by Zerubbabel, also a descendant of David. The third temple will be built by Messiah, who will also be of the tribe of Judah.

11 *Binding his foal unto the vine.* There will be in the land of Judah (when Messiah comes) grapes so large that an ass will have to be harnessed to each grape to remove it.[1]

12 *And his teeth white with milk.* There will be such an abundance of milk that the teeth will be white on account of it.

The B'chai observes: In this section relating to Judah are to be found all the letters of the (Hebrew) alphabet except the letter *Zain* (and Zain means, weapon), which shows that all the battles which the kingdom of the House of David won, were not won by weapons, but in the name of God; and hence in the name of Judah are all the letters of Jehovah, besides the letter *Daleth.*[2] The *Daleth* being the *fourth* letter of the (Hebrew) alphabet, showeth that he was the *fourth* son of Jacob. Moreover the kingdom of Judah is likened to the sun, as it is written: "And his throne as the sun before me;"[3] for as the sun was created on the *fourth* day, so likewise was Judah the *fourth* son of Jacob; and as the sun when shining by day endeavours to shine more and more, so likewise will the kingdom of Judah endeavour to become ever greater.[4]

13 *Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea,* and carry

[1] In the Talmud it is stated that each vine in the land of Israel will in future produce so many grapes that it will require two asses to carry them. The size and weight of each grape is not stated. On the same page, however, we are informed that in future, which is always understood to be the time of the Messiah, the stem or the straw of wheat will be as lofty as a palm tree, and a grain of wheat will be as big as two kidneys of a great ox. A Divine wind will open the grain, and man will have no trouble to collect the flour, which will come out of it as out of a bag. The land of Israel will also produce cakes and ready-made garments גלוסקאות וכלי מילת. All this and a great deal more will be found in *Kethuboth*, fol. 111B, and in other parts of the Talmud.

[2] יהודה = ד + יהוה. [3] Ps. lxxxix. 36. [4] See 2 Sam. iii. 1.

merchandise in ships, and will maintain Issachar, who will study the Torah. The reward of Zebulun is greater than that of Issachar, for if he gave him no food he would not study; and hence the section relating to Zebulun stands before that relating to Issachar, and shows that the reward of him who helps forward the study of the Law, and maintains the young men who study the Law, for God's sake, is greater than the reward of those that study.[1]

14 *Issachar is a strong ass.* He is like the ass, who has large bones and little flesh; so are they who study the Torah, they have but little flesh on their bodies, for the Torah weakens their strength and their flesh diminishes.

*Couching down between the market places.*[2] As an ass travels day and night, and when he rests he does so between the market places of the town (not under shelter in a stable), so also are the disciples of the wise,—they rest neither day nor night, but study the Torah, and rest not in their beds,

15 *And he saw that rest was good.* He saw that in order to be able to study the Torah, rest from commerce and war is required; and hence we pray in the Shemonah Essrah:[3] "Oh restore our judges as aforetime, and our counsellors as at the beginning; remove from us sorrow and sighing!" which means that God should settle us in Jerusalem and remove from us sorrow, then shall we have *rest* and understanding to study, as it is written: "For the earth shall be full of the

[1] The Talmud says: Whoever gives his daughter to (one that studies the Law) a disciple of the wise, manages the mercantile affairs of the disciples of the wise, and allows them the free enjoyment of his goods; him Scripture considèrs as if he had cleaved to the Shechinah. *Kethuboth*, fol. 3B.

[2] A.V., two burdens. New Revision: the sheepfolds.

[3] שמונה עשרה Shemonah Essrah, i.e. *eighteen;* a prayer consisting of eighteen blessings, daily repeated in silence at the morning, afternoon, and evening services, in a standing upright position. The Talmud states that twelve elders, and among them several prophets, took part in composing this prayer, technically called Shemonah Essrah. *Meggillah*, fol. 17B.

knowledge of the Lord:"[1] when the Messiah comes *all* will be able to study the Torah; hence before the blessing, "Oh restore," etc., stands the blessing, "Oh sound the great trumpet as a signal for our freedom," etc., which shows that when the great trumpet shall be sounded, and the Messiah comes, then will be (universal) understanding rightly to judge and to study.

*And bowed his shoulder to bear.* This teaches us that a disciple of the wise must be able "*to bear*" when he is treated with contempt.

*And became a servant unto tribute.* Issachar will *be tribute* unto Israel; and will teach them, and will decide their religious disputes.

The Midrash says: "*Issachar is a strong ass*," means that the ass occasioned the birth of Issachar; for when Jacob came from the field on an ass, and Leah hearing the ass bray, went to meet Jacob,[2] and told him, "I have hired thee to be with me this night;" she conceived Issachar.

16 *Dan shall judge his people.* The mighty Samson, of the tribe of Dan, will be a judge over Israel, and will lead them as a king. He will slay many of the Philistines, not with any weapon, but with the jawbone of an ass *three thousand* men.[3]

The text likens Samson to a serpent; for as a serpent moves silently and kills many people, so Samson went alone, without any noise, and slew many of the Philistines.

Another explanation why he is likened to a serpent is: Because as a serpent has a sting of fire, so also Samson burned the corn of the Philistines. He caught three hundred foxes, and bound firebrands to their tails, and drove them into the corn of the Philistines, and burned it.[4] When the Philistines

[1] Isa. xi. 9.

[2] In the Talmud this interesting event is thus stated. The ass caused the birth of Issachar, for it stopped *providentially* at Leah's tent, and detained Jacob there. *Niddah*, fol. 31A.

[3] The Bible says only *one thousand*. Judg. xv. 16. [4] Judg. xv. 4, 5.

became aware of this, they made war with Israel. Three thousand men of Israel came to bind and deliver Samson to the Philistines, saying, "They want thee only, and no other man." And Samson said unto them, "Swear unto me that ye yourselves will not kill me, and I will let you bind me." They swore that they would do him no harm, and then they bound him with two new thick ropes, and carried him to the Philistines. When the Philistines saw Samson being carried, they trumpeted and danced for joy. But the Spirit of God came upon him, and the ropes on his hands became as burnt flax, and he was at once released. He then took a jawbone of an ass, wherewith he slew three thousand men of the Philistines.

After this Samson felt very thirsty, and having nothing to drink, he prayed to God and said: "Lord of the Universe! Thou hast delivered me, and shall I now die of thirst and fall into their hands?" Then God wrought a miracle that water came out of the jawbone as from a fountain, and Samson drank and remained alive. It is also stated in Scripture, that when Samson and his parents went to Timnath, and a lion met and roared against him, that the prophetic spirit of the Lord came upon him and he tore the lion as one would tear a kid, and he had no weapon with him.

The Midrash writes: The text likens Samson to a serpent, because a serpent has no feet, and Samson was lame in his legs.[1]

18 *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*[2] Jacob foresaw that Samson would be the last judge of Israel. Although Samuel was judge after him, yet he had not so much fighting as Samson had; and Jacob said, "Although Samson will die

[1] Balaam was lame in one of his legs only, but Samson in both legs. So says the Talmud. *Soteh*, fol. 10A.

[2] These words of the dying Patriarch are repeated by pious Jews every morning and evening all the year round. In the morning, immediately after reciting the creed, *i.e.* "*The Thirteen Fundamental Articles of*

fighting in the war, yet I trust in Thee, O God, that thou wilt continue to save us from our enemies." Thus writes the Ramban.

Rashi says: Samson himself said, "*I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,*" when he took hold of the pillars of the house, and prayed that God would help him to overthrow it, and avenge Himself on the Philistines, although he himself

*Faith,*" this scripture text is repeated three times in Hebrew, and as many times in Chaldee, each time differently worded, as follows :—

לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּיתִי יְיָ׃ קִוִּיתִי יְיָ לִישׁוּעָתְךָ׃ יְיָ לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּיתִי׃
לְפוּרְקָנָךְ סַבְּרִית יְיָ׃ סַבְּרִית יְיָ לְפוּרְקָנָךְ׃ יְיָ לְפוּרְקָנָךְ סַבְּרִית׃

*i.e.* "For Thy salvation have I waited O Lord!
I have waited O Lord! for Thy salvation.
O Lord! for Thy salvation have I waited."

It will be observed in the above Hebrew and Chaldee passages, that instead of יְהוָה *Jehovah* (translated LORD), יְיָ, sounding *Y<sup>e</sup>Ya*, is employed. This new name of the Deity in place of *Jehovah* is the almost universal practice throughout the Jewish Liturgies, excepting in the Karaite Liturgy, where יָהּ has been adopted. Compared with *Jehovah*, or with any other Divine name which occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures, יָהּ alone seems to be the real *Shem-Hammephorash*, because all the names are communicable and capable of being pronounced, and this alone cannot be uttered and is quite *Ineffable.*

In the evening, before retiring to rest, this Scripture text is again repeated in the same manner as in the morning, but in Hebrew only. Then the following is recited three times also in Hebrew: "In the name of (יְיָ) *Y<sup>e</sup>Ya* the God of Israel, on my right hand is *Michael*, and on my left *Gabriel;* before me is *Ariel*, and behind me *Raphael;* over my head is the *Shechinah* of God." About the *Shechinah* see footnote on page 138 *ante.*

As the name (יְיָ) *Y<sup>e</sup>Ya* is nowhere even once mentioned in the Bible, and as it cannot be an abbreviation of (יְהוָה) *Jehovah*, because the latter is written with *one Yod* only, and the other is with *two Yods*, the natural question now is: *Who is* Y<sup>e</sup>YA? or What is it an abbreviation of? The *Secret of Jehovah* hidden and concealed under the two *Yods* of Y<sup>e</sup>Ya seems to be peeping out from under the Rabbinical veil of mystery, and all that is now wanting is a hand to roll the veil aside and bring the hidden secret to light. See Acts xx. 27 = Luke xi. 52.

would be killed at the same time, about which he was not concerned, as it is written, "*Let me die with the Philistines!*"[1]

19 *Gad, a troop shall overcome him.* Jacob said, "That the tribe of Gad would cross the Jordan with his brethren to fight against the idolaters, of whom he will slay a great many, and then he will return from the land of Israel and conquer his portion in the outside land, and come home in peace without losing a man of his."[2]

20 *Out of Asher his bread shall be fat.* His land shall be fat with an abundance of olive trees to supply the world with oil.[3]

21 *Naphtali is a hind let loose.* Jacob said to Naphtali, that his land will ripen its fruits as quick as a hind runs.

*He giveth goodly words.* Blessings will be said over his fruits. Another interpretation is: Jacob prophetically foretold that ten thousand men of Naphtali would run as quick to fight with Sisera as a hind runs quick. *He giveth goodly words;* this refers to the song of Deborah and Barak, in consequence of the quickness of Naphtali to fight.

The Midrash says: Esau would not allow Jacob to be buried in the cave, and the swift-footed Naphtali, who could run as quick as a hind, was sent to Egypt to bring the title deed which proved that Esau had sold the portion in the cave.[4]

The Ramban and the Toldoth Yitzkhac write: Naphtali was likened to a hind, because it is the custom to train hinds to carry letters. When a hind is born with the king of the North, he sends it to the king of the South, who trains it, and when he wishes to send a letter to the king of the North, he binds the letter to its neck, and thus good news is conveyed, which is the meaning of "*He giveth goodly words.*"

[1] Judg. xvi. 30.

[2] Josh. i 12–16; xxii. 6.

[3] The land of Asher produced oil *like a well*, מושך שמן כמעיין, *Menachoth*, fol. 85B. See also *Tal. Misc.*, 278, 22.

[4] See *Tal. Misc.*, 186.

The Imrae Noam says: "*Naphtali is a hind set loose,*" he goes quick, for no man detains him, because, *he giveth goodly words* to every man he meets.

22 *Joseph is a fruitful son, a fruitful son to the eye.*[1] Joseph is a graceful-looking son; in the sight of every one who saw him he was graceful.

*The daughters step over the wall.*[2] The daughters of Egypt stepped over the walls to look at the beauty of Joseph.

Another interpretation of "*Joseph is a fruitful son,*" is: When Esau came and saw all the wives and their children, Joseph placed himself in front of his mother,[3] and so stretched and expanded himself, that Esau should not be able to see her, and take her, for she was very beautiful. Therefore said Jacob: "Because thou hast thus stretched and expanded thyself, thou art worthy that all women should be eager to see *thy* beauty." *Thou art above the eye,* that is to say, thou wilt be so worthy that *the evil eye* will never affect thee.

The B'chai writes: The text repeats twice the expression "*fruitful son,*" to show that from the two sons of Joseph much people would be multiplied in Israel, even as Moses expresses it: "*They are the ten thousand of Ephraim, and they are the ten thousand of Manasseh.*"[4] *The daughters step over the wall.* The daughters of Egypt stepped over the walls to see the beauty of Joseph; but Joseph himself was very modest and never looked at any woman; hence he deserved to attain to royalty.

The Midrash says: *Joseph was a fruitful son* means, that because of the kine[5] which Pharaoh saw in his dream, Joseph attained to greatness and became ruler.

23 *They sorely grieved him;* namely Potiphar and his wife.

[1] A.V., a fruitful bough by a well. [2] A.V., whose branches.

[3] At the meeting of Jacob and Esau (Gen. xxxiii. 2); Joseph was at that time a mere child. [4] Deut. xxxiii. 17.

[5] פָּרוֹת, Paroth, *i.e.* kine: פּוֹרָת, Porath, *i.e.* fruitful. By a play on these two words the Midrash interprets the text to mean what it does not mean.

*They shot at him; i.e.* they quarrelled with him, viz. his brethren.

*The dividers hated him;* namely the brethren, who had to divide with him the inheritance, hated him.[1]

24 *But his bow was set in strength;* that is to say, he became a ruler.

*And the arms of his hands were adorned with fine gold;* the king put on his hand the gold ring. All this Joseph had

*From the hands of the mighty God of Jacob;* from thence he was counted worthy to be lord over Israel, and Joseph was also therefore called "*The Stone of Israel,*" because each of the twelve tribes of Israel had a stone in the breastplate of the High Priest, on which each had his name engraved.[2] The stone of Joseph was the onyx. The two stones on the shoulders of the ephod which the High Priest wore, were onyxes, on which *all* the names of the twelve tribes were engraved.[3] As the onyx was the stone allotted to Joseph, and as on *this* particular species of gem all the tribes of Israel were engraven, therefore was Joseph called, "*The Stone of Israel.*"

25 *From the God of thy father, who shall help thee.* All this came from God, and because thou hast always been with God, and wouldest not sin with Potiphar's wife, therefore *the Almighty shall bless thee, with blessings of the breasts and of the wombs,* that is to say: Husbands and wives that will come out of thee will never neglect their children, and out of thee there will be many children in the world.

26 *The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors.* "My blessing is stronger and better than theirs, for God blessed me without measure." *These blessings shall be on the head of Joseph.*

27 *Benjamin shall ravin also as a wolf.* Jacob prophetically foresaw that the tribe of Benjamin would be obliged to catch

[1] See the rendering in the A.V.

[2] Exod. xxviii. 21.

[3] *Ibid.* xxviii. 9-12.

wives, for on account of the concubine of Gibeah they were in Cherem (under ban), and as none were allowed to give them wives, they were obliged to catch them [1]—*as a wolf.*

*In the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* In *the morning: First* will be king Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, who will take the property and the money of the idolaters. And *at night*: And *finally* will be Mordecai and Esther, of the tribe of Benjamin, who will take the money and the property of Haman.

28 *And this is it that their father spake unto them and blessed them.* Thus the text shows us that although Jacob blamed several of his children, he nevertheless blessed them all alike. Jacob in his last will said:

29 *I am to be gathered unto my people, bury me with my fathers in the cave.* The Ramban says: Although Joseph alone was sworn to carry him to the cave, yet all his children had to carry him there.

31 *There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife.* He says: "There *they* buried Isaac," though he himself buried him; but because Esau also aided him, he would not mention himself coupled with Esau, and hence he said, "*They* buried."

*And there I buried Leah.* "Thus I got a legal right in the property of the cave, that Esau might not claim the same," for the cave could not hold more than three couples; for this reason Joseph did not order his remains to be buried in the cave.

When they carried Jacob to be buried, Tzepho, the son of Eliphaz, the grandson of Esau, came with a large number of people, and fought a battle with Joseph and his people. But Joseph, without losing one of his men, was victorious and took Tzepho and his chiefs prisoners, and he kept him in prison in Egypt till he died.

[1] *Vide* Judg. xix.-xxi. God is said to have been *studying* the subject of the concubine of Gibeah. *Gittin*, fol. 6B.

33 *And Jacob yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.* The Gemara says: No *death* is mentioned, because Jacob did not die.[1]

The Ramban, the Toldoth Yitzkhac and the B'chai write: As his body was embalmed with spices to preserve it, he must have died; but as Jacob was very holy, his soul remained in his body as still living, and this is the meaning of the Gemara, "Jacob did not die."

Another interpretation is this: Because Jacob had instructed disciples in the Torah, and whenever something is repeated in the name of a deceased teacher, his lips move in his grave,[2] as if he were alive, therefore death is not mentioned of Jacob.

CHAPTER L.—3 *And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days;* forty days during the operation of embalming, and thirty days the (usual period of) mourning. *The physicians embalmed Israel.*

5 *In the grave which I have digged for me.* Joseph said unto Pharaoh, "Jacob has ordered in his will: Ye shall bury me in the cave which I have bought for me." It is therefore said (in the original) *Carithie,*[3] which means *heaped,* for Jacob took gold and silver and laid it before Esau in *a heap,* and said, "Take this for thy share in the cave."[4]

6 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.* "Had he not made thee swear, I would not have let thee go; but I cannot order thee to break an oath, because thou wilt then also break the oath which I made thee swear, not to reveal that I am unable to speak Lashon-hakodesh, *i.e.* the holy tongue."

7 *And Joseph went up to bury his father.* Nine groups went up in procession. 1. Joseph alone. 2. The princes of

[1] אמר ר' יוחנן יעקב אבינו לא מת, *i.e.* Rabbi Johanan says: Our father Jacob did not die. *Taanith,* fol. 5B. He still lives in his children.

[2] שפתותיו דובבות בקבר: *Yevamoth,* fol. 97A.

[3] A.V., I have digged. [4] *Vide* xlvi. 6, *ante.*

Pharaoh. 3. The elders. 4. The chieftains of Egypt. 5. Joseph's household. 6. His brethren. 7. His father's household. 8. People in carriages. 9. A great many people on foot.

9 *It was a very great company;* for the angels followed after the people. The same angels that watched over Jacob during his life watched over him after his death.[1]

10 *The threshing-floor of Atad.* All the kings of Canaan and of Ishmael came to fight and dispute the burial, but when they saw Joseph's crown suspended from the coffin, they all suspended their own crowns also.[2] Hence the name of the place, "*The threshing-floor of Atad,*" which means, as a threshing-floor is surrounded by a hedge of thorns, so was Jacob's coffin surrounded by crowns.

12 *And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them.* The first thing he commanded was, that none of his grandsons should carry him, because some of them were of the daughters of Canaan;[3] also that no Egyptian should carry his coffin. He also commanded that three of his sons should go on each side (of the coffin). In the same order as they went by the coffin, they subsequently went in the desert by the Ark of the Covenant. He commanded also that Levi should not carry him, because his children would carry the Ark of the Covenant. Joseph, he ordered not to carry him, because he was a ruler, and in their place should be Ephraim and Manasseh.

14 *And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father.* Rashi remarks: When the funeral procession started, the Egyptians went before the brethren, but on the return the brethren went before the Egyptians, because the Egyptians having noticed that all the

[1] Comp. Jude 9.

This story, considerably varied, and more fully described, in *Soteh*, fol. 13A, may be read in *Talm. Misc.*, 186.

[2] *Vide* xlvi. 10, *ante.*

kings suspended their crowns in honour of Jacob, they showed honour to the children of Jacob, by letting them go before.

15 *Joseph's brethren saw now that their father was dead*, because Joseph dined now at a separate table, they thought that he hated them and would avenge himself on them. But Joseph had no such intention.

The Chizkûni writes: On the way to bury Jacob they came to the pit into which Joseph was cast. Joseph stopped there and blessed God who miraculously helped him out of the pit. The brethren noticed this, and began to fear that Joseph, being now reminded of the afflictions he suffered at their hands, would avenge himself on them. Therefore they commissioned the children of Bilhah [1] to say unto Joseph:—

16 *Thy father did command before he died*, that Joseph should forgive them for their having sold him. Although that was a lie, for Jacob knew nothing of his having been sold; and he knew also that Joseph was a righteous man and would not return evil for evil; yet, for the sake of peace, a lie may be told when it does no one any harm.[2]

17 *The servants of the God of thy father.* The Toldoth Yitzkhac observes: They said, "*Forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father*," because at the recognition Joseph told them: "*It was not you that sent me hither, but God sent me before you to preserve you.*" [3] Hence they pleaded, "we have not sinned in selling thee, for we have been only the messengers and servants of God in doing so.

The B'chai remarks: The brethren prayed him for forgiveness, but we do not find that he did forgive them; and the Gemara says: When one sinneth against his fellow man, even his repentance is of no help to him, until he first appease his offended fellow man.[4] But they died and did not obtain

[1] It is inferred from Gen. xxxvii. 2, that Joseph was brought up by Bilhah, and hence her children were more intimate with Joseph than the rest of the brothers. [2] See note to xlviii. 1 *ante.*

[3] עד שירצה את חברו. *Yoma*, fol. 85B. [4] Chap. xlv. 7, 8.

(Joseph's) forgiveness, and in consequence of that sin, ten worthy Rabbis of Israel subsequently perished.[1]

They said unto Joseph: "If thy father is dead, his God liveth, and *His* servants we are!" *And Joseph wept when they thus spake unto him.* And afterwards.

18–21 *His brethren also went and fell down before his face, and said, We are thy servants, and Joseph said unto them, Fear not, am I in the place of God?* "If I wished to do you evil, I could not do so without God; just as ye thought evil against me, but God turned it into good, both for me and you to be preserved in famine. *Now therefore fear ye not; I will continue to nourish you and your little ones.*" From this we learn that as soon as Jacob died, the famine commenced again; for when Jacob came into Egypt, the famine ceased for his sake,[2] but now it recommenced; hence said Joseph, "I will nourish you in famine."

Joseph said to his brethren: "Through you I became ennobled; for the whole world said before that I was a *slave*, but through you it became known that I am of noble people, and if I slay you, people would say, he only boasted of them, but they were not his brethren, for he killed them.

22 *And Joseph lived an hundred and ten years*, and he saw grandchildren of Manasseh, and he brought them up. The text shows us, because they were brought up in Joseph's house, they were righteous men, having learnt from Joseph to be so.

25 *And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel*, that when they would be redeemed (from the captivity of Egypt) they should carry him into the land of Israel. And Joseph was so worthy, that Moses himself carried his bones; and each tribe also took part in carrying the bones of their great ancestors; that is to say, the children of Reuben carried the bones of Reuben; and thus the tribe of Simeon, and all other tribes.

When Israel came out of Egypt, the coffin of Joseph was *in*

[1] Executed by order of the Roman Government, especially during the reign of Hadrian.

[2] *Vide* chap. xlvii. 19.

*the river Nile*, for the Egyptians said, "Let the river be blessed for his sake." Moses took a silver plate, and engraved on it: "Come up Ox! Come up Ox!" which means: "Come up Joseph who is named Ox."[1] And Moses exclaimed: "Israel is going out of Egypt, and the Shechinah is waiting for thee! Tarry not, but come out of the river! If thou wilt not come out, Israel will then be free from thy oath." On this his coffin swam out of the river.[2]

Because Moses had personally busied himself with the bones of Joseph, he was counted worthy that God Himself should bury him.[3]

From this we learn, if one does a good work himself, not through another (by proxy), he will have a great reward of God.

END OF SECTION XII., WHICH IS THE END OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 17.

[2] The Talmud gives a different version of this interesting story. See *Gen. Acc. to Talmud*, p. 492.

[3] Deut. xxxiv. 6.

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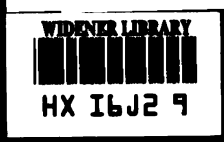


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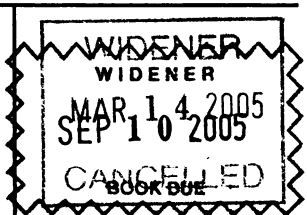


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